

Race and Theory: Culture, Poverty, and Adaptation To Discrimination In Wilson and Ogbu*

MARK GOULD
Haverford College

This article provides the theoretical resources to resolve a number of conundrums in the work of William Julius Wilson and John Ogbu. Contrary to what Wilson's and Ogbu's work sometimes imply, inner-city blacks are not enmeshed in a "culture of poverty," but rather are generally committed to mainstream values and their normative expectations. Activities that deviate from these values derive from the cognitive expectations inner-city blacks have formed in the face of their restricted legitimate opportunity structures. These expectations, which suggest that educational and occupational success are improbable for inner-city residents, are accurate. If their opportunities were to improve, their cognitive expectations would change and most would be committed to taking advantage of these new opportunities. The differences that separate the inner-city poor from whites center on cultural symbols, which help constitute their identity, sometimes in opposition to the white majority. Most deficiencies in performance among blacks stem not from these cultural attributes, but from the way they are processed in white-dominated organizations. Given a majority commitment to equal opportunity and a majority belief that blacks actually have equal opportunity, many conclude from their performance that blacks are in some sense inferior. This "new racism" overdetermines the performance of blacks.

This paper is constructed around four sets of deliberations: (1) Why is it that analysts like William Julius Wilson and John Ogbu, who intend to criticize culture-of-poverty and cultural-deprivation arguments, invariably fall back into those same arguments in their work? I contend that the reason is their failure to differentiate between normative expectations, which are stable in the face of situational variation, and cognitive expectations, which are modified in light of situational change.

(2) Is it possible to argue cogently and persuasively, as both Wilson and Ogbu want to argue, that the inner-city poor, members of the so-called underclass, are capable of responding positively to beneficial changes in their opportunity structure? I contend that one can do so only if one maintains two contentions: first, members of the underclass manifest the same cognitive capacities as members of middle-class society, even though these capacities were mastered in the assimilation of widely divergent skills. Second, available opportunities will be sought after and utilized in ways that Wilson and Ogbu view as desirable only if members of the underclass share the same values as persons in middle-class society,

*An earlier version of this essay was presented at the 1995 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Washington, D.C. There I benefited from the comments of Gerald Jaynes. In addition, over its long period of gestation, I have benefited from the comments of many colleagues and friends, including Frank Domurad, Kathy Neckerman, Michael Weinstein, and Eric Wright. If I had been able to respond more adequately to Maris Gillette's detailed critique, this paper would be a much more persuasive effort. John Ogbu spent two days at Haverford many years ago; the opportunity to discuss his work with him at that time reinforced my conviction that I needed to better understand both its strengths and limitations. More recently, he kindly read and sent me detailed comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Over the years I've shared many enjoyable conversations with Bill Wilson—in Chicago, at Haverford, and at conferences in the United States and Europe. He is both open to criticism and enormously capable of defending his own arguments; in consequence I've learned a tremendous amount from him, only some of which is embedded in this essay. Please direct all correspondence to the author at Haverford College, Dept. of Sociology, Haverford, PA, 19041 USA. mgould@haverford.edu

only if their normative expectations are congruent with the dominant values in U.S. society. A correct understanding of the value-commitments of the inner-city poor, and thus the redemption of the argument that the inner-city poor would respond positively to advantageous changes in their opportunity structure, is possible only if we distinguish between social norms, which define right/wrong, and cultural norms, which define meaning. The failure to make this distinction leads to a conflation of a culturally constituted oppositional identity with a lack of value commitment to the American Creed.

(3) Wilson argues that the social structural position of inner-city blacks is a residue of past discrimination; he believes that labor-market discrimination is largely a thing of the past. If so, why do many middle-class whites (and some blacks) publicly express their hostility to and depredation of (especially poor, inner-city) blacks? Why, for example, will the owners and personnel directors of businesses overtly express their low opinion of blacks to social scientists from the University of Chicago? I argue that the reason is that these whites (and blacks) believe that they are simply facing facts and that this belief is a natural outcome of the conjunction of a belief in egalitarian values, the belief that equal opportunity is available to all, and clear indications that blacks do not attain the same level of success as do whites. This "new racism," I contend, is an important factor limiting the educational and occupational opportunity of inner-city blacks.

(4) Both Ogbu and Wilson presume that blacks share the same capacities as whites. This presumption gives rise to one of the crucial questions in Ogbu's current work: Why do blacks, if they share the same capacities as whites, perform less well than comparable whites? For example, how is it possible for economically homogeneous blacks to perform less well than their white counterparts within the same or comparable organizations? Contrary to what Wilson suggests, to answer this question one must understand the nature of *contemporary* social structural discrimination. When the major institutions in a society are constructed within the culture of and in the interests of one group instead of another, even when the subordinate group is included within those institutions, its performances will be, on average, less proficient than the dominant group. Organizations may systematically favor the culturally constituted performances of one group over the developmentally equivalent, substantively different, performances of another group. Although some groups, including certain immigrant communities, are willing to accommodate to the dominant culture in U.S. society, others, including many blacks, have adopted a set of cultural meanings that constitutes their identity in (at least partial) opposition to the dominant culture. The latter groups may be reluctant to transform themselves by adopting the dominant cultural perspective and performances, especially in situations where they believe that even if they adopted the dominant cultural styles, discrimination against them would continue.

Several conclusions emerge from my examination of these paradoxes in the literature of race in the United States. The first is that inner-city blacks are not enmeshed in a "culture of poverty." Rather, most inner-city blacks are committed to mainstream values, even when their activities contradict their value commitments. These "deviant" activities derive from the cognitive expectations inner-city blacks have formulated in response to their opportunity structures. Unfortunately these cognitive expectations, which suggest that educational and occupational success are improbable for most inner-city residents, are accurate. However, if their opportunity structures were to improve, creating mainstream opportunities for inner-city blacks, their cognitive expectations would change and most would be committed, because of their orthodox values, to taking advantage of the newly enhanced opportunities.

Inner-city blacks have the cognitive capacity to adapt. The differences that separate them from the white community center on cultural symbols, which help to constitute their identity. If blacks sometimes do not succeed, even when they appear to be given a fair chance, this may be do to the fact that facially neutral organizations often have an adverse

impact on blacks. Such organizations implicitly privilege white cultural attributes and devalue the cultural performances blacks bring to them. Black "failure" in such organizations is overdetermined by whites who are committed to egalitarian values of equal opportunity, who believe that blacks have equal opportunity, and who conclude from the fact that black performances often do not measure up to white performances that blacks are lazy and/or dumb. This conclusion, which its adherents see as simply "facing facts," reinforces the belief and is reinforced by the belief that facially neutral organizations provide equal opportunity to all comers and that the talented and hard working succeed. In consequence, this "new racism" reinforces the barriers that blacks actually confront.

NORMATIVE AND COGNITIVE EXPECTATIONS

Wilson: Adaptation to Opportunity Structures or a Culture of Poverty

For Wilson the "underclass" is characterized in terms of its structural location, its social isolation in inner-city areas of highly concentrated poverty (at least 40 percent). There many poor people develop a weak labor-force attachment, which signifies for Wilson their marginal position due to limited job opportunities and limited access to informal networks through which jobs are often obtained, not that they don't view work as desirable (1991–92:650). While recognizing the necessity of considering culture ("the extent to which individuals follow their inclinations as they have been developed by learning or influence from other members of the community" [1991:10; 1991–92:653]) and social psychology (including "negative social dispositions, limited aspirations, and casual work habits" [1991–92:642]), he argues repeatedly against culture-of-poverty contentions, which claim, in their more conservative variants, that the underclass must be rehabilitated culturally before its members can advance (Wacquant and Wilson 1989a:9; 1989b:97; Wilson 1987:13; 1989:183, 186; 1991–92:653; Wilson, Aponte, Kirschenman, and Wacquant 1988:147–8).

Wilson believes that conservative assertions about the underclass are often circular, inferring underclass cultural values from behavior and explaining that behavior in light of the inferred values (1987:5). This often leads to a failure to recognize that the best way to modify ghetto norms and aspirations (*ibid.*:7) is by modifying the opportunity structure the underclass confronts.¹ Wilson's positive theoretical contention is simple: While he believes that concentrated poverty gives rise to social norms, he contends that if new situations, new opportunities, were to appear for inner-city blacks, their norms would change eventually.²

¹There are two problems with these contentions: (1) Many conservatives recognize that changes in opportunity structures will change behavior; they simply focus on different structures, advocating, for example, the abolition of welfare as a way of motivating work (Murray 1984). Wilson, of course, recognizes this argument and confronts it (Neckerman, Aponte, and Wilson 1988; Wilson 1987:ch. 4; 1989:188). (2) When Wilson refers to ghetto norms and aspirations, he too is inferring from the socially pathological behavior he sees in the ghetto (see, for example, Wilson 1987:7). This has changed in the thus-far published work from his multimillion dollar research project in Chicago (see, for example, 1996:69, 179–81), but, at least so far, Wilson has presented less textured discussions of the normative orientations of the inner-city poor than I had hoped to find.

²"As economic and social opportunities change, new behavioral solutions originate and develop into patterns, later to be complemented and upheld by norms. If new situations appear, both the patterns of behavior and the norms *eventually* undergo change. 'Some behavioral norms are more persistent than others, but over the long run, all of the norms and aspirations by which people live are nonpersistent: they rise and fall with changes in situations'" (1987:14, quoting Gans 1968:211; my italics). Wilson used similar words in an earlier essay (1984b:110), where he also commented that "cultural values do not *determine* behavior or success. Rather, cultural values grow out of specific circumstances and life chances and reflect one's position in the class structure. Thus if lower-class blacks have low aspirations or do not plan for the future, it is not ultimately the result of a different cultural norm but because they are responding to restricted opportunities, a bleak future, and feelings of resignation originating in bitter personal experiences. Accordingly, behavior described as social pathological and associated with lower-class ethnics should not be analyzed as a cultural aberration but as a symptom of class inequality" (*ibid.*:109–10; Wilson's italics; my underscore).

It is, perhaps, pertinent, to remind ourselves of Keynes's observation that in the long run we are all dead.

Wilson's image of inner-city poverty emphasizes the social disorganization that derives from the effects of concentrated poverty, concentrated joblessness (1994b:249-50; 1996), and social isolation. He highlights the structural consequences of the outmigration of middle-class families from the inner city, not "ghetto culture." As the concentration of poverty and joblessness has increased it has become almost impossible to sustain inner-city churches, banks, stores, schools, recreational facilities, and neighborhood associations. The consequent social isolation cuts off access to traditional avenues of mobility, which then affects the social perception of opportunity. The modified perceptions then determine social strategies that tend to reproduce the structural conditions originally responsible for them. Individuals adapt to their perceived opportunity structures and these adaptations reinforce the objective mechanisms constitutive of inner-city social isolation and poverty (Wilson, Aponte, Kirschenman and Wacquant 1988:147-8). It is clear that Wilson wants to emphasize the social structural effects of inner-city poverty (see p. 148), but it is also clear that, for him, the disorganization of the inner city generates cultural, subjective expectations that overdetermine the poverty of the inner-city poor (1996:ch. 3).

Wilson stresses, in commenting on the work of Clark, Rainwater, and Liebow from the 1960s, that unlike culture-of-poverty or blame-the-victim arguments, they presented both a sensitive portrayal of the destructive features of ghetto life and a detailed analysis of the structural conditions that produced these features (Wilson 1987:127). "Thus in reading these works one received a clear understanding of how the economic and social situations into which so many poor blacks are born produce modes of adaptation and create subcultural patterns that take the form of a 'self-perpetuating pathology'" (ibid.:126, quoting Clark 1965:150; Wilson 1984a:76).³ I'm uncertain how to understand this statement. Many culture-of-poverty theorists, including Lewis, recognized that the "self-perpetuating pathologies" and "subcultural patterns" they analyzed had roots in systematic, social structural oppression.⁴ Wilson apparently wants both to reduce ghetto-specific culture (1987:138) to the social situation that produces it, thus making it malleable in the face of situational change, *and* to see it as self-perpetuating in the face of structural change.⁵

³"Group variation in behavior, norms, and values reflects variation in group access to organizational channels of privilege and influence. Since class background and race are two major factors in determining group access to such channels, the opportunities available to the ghetto underclass, a group that represents the combination of both race and class subordination, are therefore more limited and the structural constraints are greater. *Ghetto-specific culture* is a response to these structural constraints and limited opportunities" (Wilson 1987:136-37; my italics.; see also p. 133 and Wilson 1996:52). This quotation is followed by an attempt to distinguish between his notion of "social isolation" and the notion of a culture of poverty. The culture of poverty "places strong emphasis on the autonomous character of the cultural traits once they come into existence. In other words, these traits assume a 'life of their own' and continue to influence behavior even if opportunities for social mobility improve" (1987:137). Social isolation links "ghetto-specific behavior with the problems of societal organization. More specifically, concepts such as *social buffer*, *concentration effects*, and *social isolation* are used to describe the social and institutional mechanisms that enhance patterns of social dislocations originally caused by racial subjugation but that have been strengthened in more recent years by such developments as the class transformation of the inner city and changes in the urban economy" (ibid.). This distinction isn't intelligible unless we understand the nature of "ghetto-specific culture" and grasp why it, unlike other cultural complexes, will change in relatively short order in response to situational alterations in opportunity structures. (The contention that some normative orientations persist in the face of social structural changes is argued in the next section, "Capacities, Performances and Social Values.") I explain why Wilson's presumption that norms, values, and culture change in the face of changed opportunity structures (ibid.:76, 77, 133) precludes an explanation of the likely nature and direction of the adaptation to altered circumstances.)

⁴Wilson recognizes that this was Lewis's position (Wilson 1989:185).

⁵Wilson clearly recognizes this dilemma: "If my concept of *social isolation* does not imply self-perpetuating cultural traits, am I completely ruling out the possibility that some cultural traits may in fact take on a life of their own for a period of time and thereby become a constraining or liberating factor in the life of certain individuals and groups in the inner city? It would be dogmatic to rule out this possibility, however, as pointed out in chapter 1, as economic and social situations change, cultural traits, created by previous situations, likewise *eventually* change even though it is possible that some will linger on and influence behavior for a period of time. Accordingly, the key conclusion from a public policy perspective is that programs created to alleviate poverty, joblessness, and related forms of social dislocation should place primary focus on changing the social and economic situations, not the cultural traits, of the ghetto underclass" (1987:138, see also pp. 61-62, 76, 77, 158-59. Italics

Despite his attempts to differentiate his argument from the culture-of-poverty position, when Wilson fills out his description of the mechanisms that characterize the underclass's "way of life," he regresses into arguments that look very much like the culture-of-poverty arguments he criticizes. We learn, for example, that within the underclass "The development of cognitive, linguistic, and other educational and job-related skills necessary for the world of work in the mainstream economy is . . . adversely affected" by high rates of neighborhood joblessness (Wilson 1987:57).⁶ Although the removal of racial barriers has helped the better trained, most talented, and best educated segments of the black population, the economic and social position of those who have been "crippled" by their social isolation is not significantly improved (ibid.:113–4). In inner-city neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty, norms and patterns of behavior emerge that are incompatible with steady work (ibid.:61). Ghetto-related behavior, culture, and attitudes emerge that reinforce the economic marginality of inner-city residents who live in areas of high joblessness (Wilson, 1986:52, 66). The clear implication is that many, if not most, of the members of the underclass have been "crippled" by the weight of past discrimination. They abide by social norms that would inhibit their adaptation to changed opportunity structures and it seems that they lack the personal resources to succeed when given the opportunity.

The question is whether the adaptations developed within the underclass are "self-perpetuating." Will the "culture" that emerges in response to social isolation, which in Wilson's argument helps make the inner city of 1980 and 1990 much more pathological than the inner city of 1960, make it impossible, or very difficult, for the truly disadvantaged to take advantage of an improved opportunity structure (if there should be an improved opportunity structure)? If norms and culture are simply direct adaptations to social situations, reducible to the situational constraints in which people live, we need not worry, contrary to what Wilson sometimes suggests, about excluding them from our analysis. If, however, norms and culture have some independent explanatory power, we have to conceptualize them autonomously and explain when and which types of norms will be modified readily in light of changes in opportunity structures and when and which types of norms will remain resilient in the face of those changes.

Ogbu: Adaptation to Opportunity Structures or a Culture of Poverty

In *Minority Education and Caste*, Ogbu contends that the relative lack of upward occupational mobility among blacks is due primarily to their subordinate racial status, not to their being socialized into different cognitive styles. Racial stratification, not class stratification, generates school performance consistent with the social and occupational roles permitted to subordinate caste-like minorities (Ogbu 1978:8).⁷ His pivotal hypothesis is that

in original.). In this comment Wilson acknowledges the problem I have focused on and then avoids its theoretical resolution by emphasizing, what is in my opinion, a correct public policy orientation, the necessity of focusing on opportunity structures. However, if my claims about the ambiguity of his theoretical argument are correct, we should expect to find Wilson waffling about policy recommendations as well as formulating ambiguous theoretical arguments. Thus we find him suggesting that "a program of adult education and training may be necessary for some ghetto underclass males before they can either become oriented to or move into an expanded labor market" (ibid.:154), suggesting the necessity both to restructure opportunities and to transform inner-city residents.

⁶As we will see in the following section on "Capacities and Performances," Wilson's statement is ambiguous. If read literally, as focusing on "skills," it may well be correct.

⁷Ogbu differentiates between immigrant or voluntary minorities, who perceive their deprivations as temporary and are able to overcome cultural differences with the dominant population and succeed in school, and involuntary or caste-like minorities, who develop an oppositional culture in response to their perception that their lack of opportunity is permanent, and who generally "fail" in school (Ogbu 1978; 1989b:187–88; 1990:46–48; 1991a; 1991c:436–37; 1992b:8; 1993:484–88). In his later work he emphasizes the importance of the cultural differences that characterize these two groups (1991a:7, 8; 1993:488), and he drops the term "caste-like" because some caste-like immigrant groups do well in school (1995; I thank him for sending me a draft version of this essay.) Much of Ogbu's work concentrates on one involuntary minority, blacks in United States inner cities, and that group is my focus in this essay.

lower performance by blacks in school "is an adaptation to their lower social and occupational positions in adult life, which do not require high educational qualifications" (ibid.:213).⁸ Black youngsters adapt realistically to their present social condition and future occupational prospects. The returns to education that they can realistically expect, both in terms of years of school completed and grades attained, don't compensate them adequately for their efforts (ibid.:196). It makes sense for them to simply "make do," or to drop out.

When Ogbu focuses on the mechanisms that maintain this adaptation in the black community, his structural argument is compromised. He falls into a form of cultural-deprivation theory⁹ that reproduces culture-of-poverty arguments, suggesting that the caste system imposes on blacks culturally constituted motives adaptive to their status positions: dependence, compliance, and manipulation, but not autonomy, independence, and competitiveness for achievements in the wider society (ibid.:212, 213, 349).¹⁰ The lack of

⁸Ogbu's early work was about a period in U. S. history when it made some sense to view blacks as a distinct caste in terms of their occupational opportunity (see Blau and Duncan 1967, using data from 1962). (Ogbu's field work in Stockton was undertaken from September, 1968, to May, 1970 (1974:17).) By 1978 he recognized the advancements some blacks had made since 1961 (1978:170, 193). By the time of his fieldwork, some black residents of Stockton saw improved job opportunities emerging for those with good educations (1974:59–60), but Ogbu's discussion of how these emerging opportunities affected educational performance isn't clear and doesn't focus on the class differences that were emerging in the black community (ibid.:73, 80, 81). Nonetheless, his formulation is easily modified to allow for class divisions within the black community (see Featherman and Hauser 1978, a replication of Blau and Duncan, using data from 1973; Wilson 1987).

If Ogbu's contention that black performance is an adaptation to a closed opportunity structure is correct, those whose occupational prospects are good should perform differently in school than those whose occupational prospects are bad. Instead of emphasizing this class distinction, Ogbu has chosen, in his later writing, to emphasize cultural homogeneity within the black community, focusing on blacks who have maintained a sense of black community, whatever their class position, and not on those who in achieving middle-class positions in the larger community have adopted white, mainstream culture, disaffiliating from the black and passing into the white community (1991c:443).

In personal correspondence Ogbu writes as follows: "*My Writing On Black Education Is Not (or No Longer) On Ghetto-Inner-City Education But On Black American Education AS A Minority Group Education*. Although my initial fieldwork was among low-income Blacks and Mexican-Americans in Stockton, I became interested over the years in the fact that Blacks do less well in school than their White peers at every social-class level. This has two effects on what I write or say: (a) [The] Black-American academic problem is not a class problem; and (b) the problem is not limited to the inner-city or the ghetto. It is a collective problem faced by B[la]ck Americans *qua* Black Americans" (Ogbu September 4, 1995; see also 1989a:105; 1991c:444). He attempts to explain the divergence in performance between blacks and whites in terms of the expressive component of the racial stratification system, which includes a black oppositional identity and cultural frame of reference that burdens successful middle-class blacks with the stigma of appearing to act white (1989a:115–16). I comment on this argument, which sometimes mistakes structural discrimination for a trait internal to blacks, in the later section on "Structural Discrimination."

⁹Culturally deprived students, Ogbu tells us, are those "whose early experiences in the home, whose motivations for present school learning, and whose goals for the future are such as to handicap them in schoolwork" (1978:45, quoting Bloom, Davis, and Hess 1965:4). This characterization differs somewhat from the contention that the root of the problem for those who are deprived culturally "*may in large part be traced to their experiences in homes which do not transmit the cultural patterns necessary for the types of learning characteristic of the schools and the larger society*" (ibid.:45, quoting Bloom, Davis, and Hess 1965:4; Ogbu's italics). It differs significantly from the following characterization: "According to the cultural deprivation theory, children are culturally deprived when they come from home and neighborhood environments that do not provide them with adequately organized stimulation for normal development. Consequently they are retarded in linguistic, cognitive, and social development, which is why they fail in school" (ibid.:44). Ogbu's arguments don't imply that blacks have inferior linguistic or cognitive capacities or skills; instead he focuses on values and motivations that would inhibit a successful adaptation to a changed opportunity structure and imply that the blacks themselves must be transformed. The contention that black culture must be transformed before blacks would be capable of adapting to improved opportunities is a culture-of-poverty argument.

¹⁰"One result is that the minorities did not develop 'effort optimism' toward academic work (Shack 1970). That is, they did not develop a strong tradition of cultural know-how, hard work and perseverance toward academic tasks" (Ogbu 1991a:13; see also 1989a:110; 1989b:193; 1991a:24; 1991c:437, 446, 452). "**Burghersiders [poor blacks and Chicanos in Stockton, California] fail in school because they do not even try to do the work. They are not serious about their schoolwork, and therefore make no serious effort to try to succeed in school**" (Ogbu 1974:97, Ogbu's bold). "I will argue that the low-effort syndrome initially emerged as a by-product of the coping responses that involuntary minorities developed under subordination and exploitation by white Americans. However the beliefs and practices which result in the lack of serious academic attitudes and effort arose long ago and have become well integrated into the culture so that the culture bearers themselves are not fully aware of their nature or the extent of their influence on school orientation and academic striving" (ibid.:102; see also 1991c:437, 440). "How blacks acquired these beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors about schoolwork or aca-

opportunity affects elementary school students, for example, because parents whose occupational and income returns to education are low because of the job ceiling don't encourage their children to do well in school (ibid.:190–91). "On the one hand, the dominant white caste maintains the adaptation by providing blacks with inferior education and then channeling them mainly to inferior jobs after they finish school. On the other hand, *the adaptation is also maintained by certain structural and cultural features of the black environment which have evolved under the caste system*" (ibid.:213, my italics; see also 350, 357). Black children are socialized into a set of values that would be maladaptive if the reality of their opportunity structure changed to reward them meaningfully for their educational attainments.

Culture-of-poverty explanations imply that changing the structure of opportunity for the poor isn't enough; their cultural orientations will at the least inhibit them, and at the most make it impossible for them to take advantage of increased opportunities. For Ogbu, "Some cultural factors associated with difficulties in school learning among black children which originally arose in response to caste barriers will *eventually* disappear when the caste barriers are eliminated, but among the areas where remedial programs would help to speed up the desired change are attitudes toward schooling, learning habits, and self-image in relation to learning" (ibid.:366, my italics; see also 215). What seems odd about this argument is that these are areas where a change in opportunity should result in a fairly rapid adaptive change once the collective perception of the opportunity structure is altered. Instead, Ogbu's argument regresses into one where the blacks themselves must be transformed, where a significant part of the problem is internal to the culture of the oppressed group.¹¹

This regression is even more obvious in some of Ogbu's more recent work. In an essay written with Signithia Fordham, he argues that the development of an oppositional collective identity and oppositional cultural orientation supplement ecological factors, blacks' opportunity structure, in explaining black student's performance in school (Fordham and Ogbu 1986:201).¹² This cultural orientation emerges in response to the limited opportunities many (inner-city) blacks confront and "defines academic learning as 'acting white,' and academic success as the prerogative of white Americans" (ibid.:177). "Survival strategies, such as collective struggle, uncle tomming, and hustling, may encourage black Americans to develop attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and competencies that are not necessarily congruent with those required to do well in school" (ibid.:179; Ogbu 1991c:449).¹³ This is a classic culture-of-poverty argument; although the reasons for the emergent and dysfunctional culture are embedded in a discriminatory social structure, the consequent adaptation is a culture that inhibits success.

In both earlier and more recent essays Ogbu refers to this cultural orientation as a secondary cultural difference from majority culture. It emerged after members of the two groups were in contact and it emerged in opposition to the culture of the dominant group (Ogbu 1982:298–304; 1988:22–24; 1989b:189–91; 1990:48–50; 1992b:9–11; 1993:490–94). This

demic work can be traced historically to the job ceiling. And once the beliefs, attitudes and schoolwork habits came into being and more or less *took on a life of their own*, black children begin to acquire them long before they are old enough to understand the labor market" (Ogbu 1991c:446, my italics; see also 1992b:10). "[I]n the norms that support some of these survival strategies, such as hustling, the work ethic is reversed by the insistence that one should make it without working, especially without 'doing the white man's work'" (1991a:25; see also Ogbu 1989b:194).

¹¹ In a recent letter to the author, Ogbu contends that he "believe[s] that Black Americans and other bearers of secondary cultural/language differences can achieve higher school success without giving up their culture/language" (September 4, 1995). I don't question this as a statement of Ogbu's beliefs; my point is that the implications of some of his writings suggests the contrary, at least with regard to some aspects of black culture.

¹² Ogbu and Fordham confuse blacks' ecological structure—the job ceiling and poor schooling—with their adaptation to it (Fordham and Ogbu 1986:178–79).

¹³ The use of the term "competencies" is unfortunate (see also Fordham and Ogbu 1986:180; Ogbu 1991c:438), as it may imply a cultural-deprivation argument of the sort that Ogbu wants to reject. See the section on "Capacities and Performances" (*infra*).

secondary, oppositional, cultural orientation inhibits adaptation to majority group institutions in a way not manifest for primary cultural differences, which result from cultural attributes manifest before contact with the dominant group: "Because secondary cultural differences arise in order to enable the minorities to deal with dominant-group members, they often become a part of boundary-maintaining mechanisms. For this reason involuntary minorities have no desire to overcome the cultural (and language) differences because that would threaten their cultural or language identity" (1989b:190–91; see also 1990:53–54; 1991a:16; 1993:491). This orientation is not simply a cognitive adaptation to a limited set of opportunities; it is internalized as part of "black identity," "self-worth," and "security" (Ogbu 1989b:195; 1990:53–54; 1991a:26–27; 1992b:10; 1993:492, see also 501, 502). The oppositional quality of black culture "not only makes black culture truly different from white culture; it is also at the heart of the problem of black school adjustment and performance" (Ogbu 1991c:443).

For blacks, Ogbu and Fordham contend, "Learning school curriculum and learning to follow the standard academic practices of the school are often equated by the minorities with learning to 'act white; or as actually 'acting white' while simultaneously giving up acting like a minority person. . . . *It is important to point out that, even though the perceptions and behavioral responses are manifested by students, as peer groups and individuals, the perceptions and interpretations are a part of a cultural orientation toward schooling which exists within the minority community and which evolved during many generations when white Americans insisted that minorities were incapable of academic success, denied them the opportunity to succeed academically, and did not reward them adequately when they succeeded*" (Fordham and Ogbu 1986:182–83. Italics in original.). While Ogbu believes that poor black parents send their children mixed messages about school (see "Social Values in the Inner City," *supra*), he contends that the message that peers send is clear in its consequences: peer groups discourage success in school.¹⁴

If studying, working hard to get good grades, and getting good grades in school are defined as acting white (Fordham and Ogbu 1986:186), it isn't surprising that black student culture imposes barriers to academic success. Clearly Ogbu is arguing for a culture of poverty, where "a cultural model . . . determines the group members' coping responses to the U.S. society as a whole, as well as in a given locality" (1992a:292).¹⁵ I believe that Ogbu and Fordham recreate culture-of-poverty arguments because they use an undifferentiated notion of a normative orientation that conflates cognitive expectations, which are adaptive to an actor's situation, and normative expectations, which are maintained in the face of changes in that situation.

Normative and Cognitive Expectations

Niklas Luhmann draws a distinction between cognitive and normative expectations that focuses on the stability of the expectation in the face of contradiction. Disappointments

¹⁴"At the social level, peer groups discourage their members from putting forth the time and effort required to do well in school and from adopting the attitudes and standard practices that enhance academic success. They oppose adopting appropriate academic attitudes and behaviors because they are considered 'white.' Peer group pressures against academic striving take many forms, including labeling (e.g., 'brainiac' for students who receive good grades in their courses), exclusion from peer activities or ostracism, and physical assault. Individuals 'resist' striving to do well academically partly out of fear of peer responses and partly to avoid affective dissonance. Because they also share their group's sense of collective identity and cultural frame of reference, individuals may not want to behave in a manner they themselves define as 'acting white'" (Fordham and Ogbu 1986:183; see also Ogbu 1989a:113; 1991c:449–50).

¹⁵"Thus, these community forces (the group's cultural models and the coping responses the models generate, the degree of the group's trust in the White-controlled school systems, and its culturally sanctioned beliefs about cultural and language differences) ultimately influence how the minority students perceive and respond to schooling. The perceptions and responses affect the outcomes of schooling. . . . Within each minority group, individuals who follow or choose success-enhancing strategies succeed, while those who follow strategies that do not enhance school success do not succeed" (Ogbu 1992a:292).

regarding cognitive expectations lead to the alteration of the expectation; in contrast, normative expectations are maintained in the face of disappointment (Luhmann 1976:509; [1972]1985:24, 32, 33). "Cognitive expectations, then, are characterised by a not necessarily conscious preparedness to learn, whilst normative expectations signify the determination not to learn from disappointments" (Luhmann [1972]1985:33).¹⁶

According to Luhmann, "norms are *counterfactually stabilised behavioural expectations*. Their meaning implies unconditional validity, in so far as the validity of the norm is experienced, and thus institutionalised, as independent of actual fulfilment or non-fulfilment. The symbol of the 'ought' expresses primarily the expectation of such counterfactual validity" (ibid. *Italics in original.*). Although cognitive expectations are modified in the face of contrary evidence, normative expectations, norms legitimated by social values,¹⁷ obligatory norms symbolized by "ought," are maintained in the face of violations. Sometimes those violations are defined as deviance and attempts are made to remedy disappointment by changing the activities in violation of the norm. "Even the fact that disappointing behaviour is actually experienced as deviance confirms the norm" (ibid.:42).

The explicit distinction between cognitive and normative expectations can be realized only if the selection of expectation is itself expected (ibid.:40), which is to say stably institutionalized. This means that a normative order will emerge to stabilize both types of expectations. If the state of affairs to which cognitive expectations refer remains stable, the modification of those expectations may itself come to be viewed as deviant. Their cognitive status is manifest in the fact that if that factual situation is modified, and if that modification is known and accepted within the group, the cognitive expectations will be adapted to the new set of circumstances. In contrast, normative expectations will remain stable, over extended periods of time, in the face of a modification of factual particulars.¹⁸

Both normative and cognitive expectations are found in all groups. There is normally a fairly clear differentiation between them and a fairly clear set of expectations as to which type is appropriate in which circumstance. There is nonetheless the possibility that both cognitive and normative expectations will be applied to the same type of activities. For example, it is possible to view a good education as desirable, as positively valued, while at the same time recognizing that it is unobtainable. In this case, while the value might persist, the cognitive expectation might be acted upon.

The distinction between cognitive and normative expectation is missing in both Wilson's and Ogbu's work; in consequence, their discussions of the (cognitive) adaptations to closed opportunity structures recreate the image of a culture of poverty, of normative expectations that would persist in the face of altered opportunities.

If we look at Wilson's arguments through this perspective it is possible to clarify them substantially. We must begin with his emphasis on the nature of the opportunity structure faced by blacks in the inner city: "today's ghetto residents face a closed [legitimate] oppor-

¹⁶Elsewhere Luhmann (1976:509) puts it more pithily: "To learn or not to learn, that is the question."

¹⁷This is not the place to explore the weaknesses inherent in Luhmann's formulations. I believe that he has argued successfully that binding norms, and most especially legal norms, are required to manage uncertainty. I do not believe that he can explain satisfactorily the binding nature of normative expectations. For my critique of Luhmann see Gould (1992a:1534-41); for a discussion of the importance of social values in the construction of normative order see Gould (1996b); for a discussion of the relationship between legitimation, the subsumption of norms under values, and justification, procedural due process, see Gould (1993).

Luhmann conflates social norms, which define right/wrong, with cultural norms, which define sense/nonsense. His comprehension of this relationship is marred by his treatment of cultural norms as ill-developed social norms (Luhmann [1972]1985:35-37). For my understanding of the nature of cultural and social norms, see the section "Social and Cultural Norms," *infra*, and for greater detail, Gould (forthcoming).

¹⁸In the next section I emphasize one such normative expectation, the positive evaluation of education within the black community over long periods when the rate of return to education for blacks did not justify this commitment.

tunity structure" (Wacquant and Wilson 1989a:10).¹⁹ Rust-belt cities lost almost half of their manufacturing jobs, and upwards of six-tenths of their manufacturing production workers between 1958 and 1982, with the sharpest losses after 1967 (Wacquant and Wilson 1989b:79–81). Available jobs are, for the most part, of lower quality and, what is emphasized the most in his recent work, the majority of adults are not working (Wilson 1995, 1996). In addition, poor quality inner-city schools serve to solidify the social and economic isolation of the underclass (Wacquant and Wilson 1989b:93). Although many drop out before graduating from high school, even those who do graduate face a significant probability of unemployment. "The paucity of school resources, the grossly skewed class and racial composition of its public, *the severely limited chances of mobility it affords and the absence of a perceptible connection between educational and occupational success*, all add up to make the school a mechanism of exclusion for the children of Chicago's ghetto residents" (ibid.:94; my italics).

Any problem manifested for poor persons is magnified in the inner city due to the social isolation and concentration effects that result in social disorganization and the dearth of successful reference groups. For example, the concentration of low-achieving students weakens the perception of any meaningful relation between school and work and thus reduces academic aspirations (ibid.:95). Neighborhoods with few opportunities for stable and legitimate employment generate weak labor-force attachment (Wilson 1991:9–10; 1991–92:651). These neighborhoods give rise to a set of cognitive expectations: "Thus it is the local social setting and its associated structure of opportunities which explain the behavior, aspirations, and hopes of inner-city residents. Far from arising from a self-reproducing culture of poverty, their disposition toward the future, which is characterized by what may appear (from the middle-class standpoint of someone whose life is objectively ordered and regular) as a certain lack of rational planning and personal ambition, is an expression of their objective future" (Wacquant and Wilson 1989b:97). Ghetto-specific activities are cognitive adaptations to restricted opportunities. They do not actualize a system of values divergent from those institutionalized in U.S. civil religion;²⁰ they act out a set of cognitive expectations consistent with their social situation (Wacquant and Wilson 1989b:97; Wilson 1987:7–8; 1991–92:653; 1996:67, 69–72, 181). When the social situation for poor ghetto residents alters, as has been the case for those moved to suburban apartments in the Gautreaux program, their activities will alter (Rosenbaum 1991; Rosenbaum, Fishman, Brett, and Meaden 1993; Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991; Wilson 1991:7, 10; 1996:200–1).²¹

Wilson's argument about the effects of restricted opportunities parallels an important thread found in Ogbu's work. The central contention of Ogbu's major study is that black failure in school is due "not to their being socialized into different norms and cognitive styles" (1978:8), but to their adaptation to a closed legitimate opportunity structure. Black

¹⁹In my comments below I only hint at the documentation that Wilson provides for this assertion. It is argued in all of his publications dating from *The Declining Significance of Race* (Neckerman, Aponte and Wilson 1988; Wacquant and Wilson 1989a, 1989b; Wilson 1984a, 1984b, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1991–92, 1994b, 1996; Wilson, Aponte, Kirschenman and Wacquant 1988; Wilson and Neckerman 1986).

²⁰For the concept of civil religion see Bellah (1970, 1975), Bellah and Hammond (1980), and Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985).

²¹In a recent discussion about black men in the inner city, Wilson suggested that the pathological activity one finds there is due to a "lack of opportunity." He continued, "What is so interesting is to talk to the young people who have some reason to feel hopeful, who think that they have a future out there ahead of them. Their behavior is entirely different from those who don't have that. What I'm saying is that a lot of behavior that you are talking about is a direct response of people not having a future, or feeling that they don't have a future, feeling that there is little ahead for them to look forward to" (Herbert 1994:77). This position dominates *When Work Disappears*, where his discussions of women's responses to welfare and of the disjunction between commitment to mainstream achievement-oriented values and actual performance almost beg for the distinction between normative and cognitive expectations (Wilson 1996:166, 181).

"failure" in school is a consequence of "a job ceiling and other caste barriers [that] generate doubts in blacks about the value of education and of working hard to succeed in school when they do not expect to get jobs and wages commensurate with their training and abilities in comparison with whites" (ibid.:196).²² In contrast to immigrant minorities, who perceive the barriers they confront as temporary and capable of being overcome, blacks perceive the barriers that they confront as immutable. They adapt to the opportunity structure they confront (Ogbu 1978:351; 1989b:190; 1991a:14).

Ogbu sees poor blacks as confronting a double stratification of class and racial caste. Blacks have "limited access to the social goods of society by virtue of their group membership rather than because they lack training and ability" (1981a:144). In consequence, blacks "believe that it is much more difficult for *any black* than for *any white* to achieve economic and social self-betterment in the mainstream economy *through free competition based on training and ability*" (ibid.:143–144. Italics in original.). Poor blacks have no reason to see the United States as a land of opportunity. In his ethnographic study of Stockton Ogbu found that "Subordinate minorities . . . justify their lack of serious competition in school by saying that it is useless trying to work as hard as whites in school when school success would not qualify them to succeed in society *because they are blacks*" (1974:13; see also 100–1. Italics in original.).²³ Blacks and Chicanos in Stockton contrasted their situation with whites: They believe that whites know that they can succeed and, in consequence, whites try hard to succeed. Blacks don't have the opportunity to "make it" and, in consequence, they don't try as hard as the whites (ibid.:99; 1991a:23; 1991c:447–48).

In contrast to whites and immigrant minorities who manifest an "effort optimism," poor blacks have formulated cognitive expectations that effectively mirror the opportunities they confront. In response to their receiving fewer rewards than whites for working hard in school, blacks have adopted a collective adaptation. A high proportion of them do poorly in school. They have adjusted their efforts downward to a level commensurate with the rewards they expect to glean. "In a competitive situation in which people find themselves consistently 'unfairly' rewarded for their accomplishments they sooner or later adjust their efforts to fit the expected rewards" (Ogbu 1974:13).

The group adaptation entails the specification of cognitive expectations for one another and the sanctioning of deviance from those expectations. Parents teach children what they will need for their social environment, and these lessons become cognitive expectations that help to define the group (Ogbu 1985:49–51). These expectations were formed as blacks responded to the disappointments that were caused by a job ceiling. The cognitive expectations that mandate "failure" persist "because the social and economic changes begun in the 1960s have not had a significant impact on the conventional economic resources of inner-city blacks. . . . These changes have not been large enough to diminish the importance of the street economy and therefore make alternative survival strategies less attractive" (ibid.:66). These expectations should, however, change if there are changes in the opportunity structure blacks confront (Ogbu 1983:174).

Blacks, like other groups, have developed a folk theory of how one performs cultural tasks to succeed in the status system that confronts them.²⁴ "A people's [folk] theory of

²²Ogbu goes on to note that this explanation is not sufficient to explain why blacks who do not consciously evaluate their position in terms of the job ceiling do poorly in school, nor why young black children do poorly in school. (In regard to the second, see Ogbu [1989b:195].) It is his attempt to explain these phenomena that leads him into culture-of-poverty arguments.

²³One of Ogbu's informants commented as follows: "My parents felt that because of prejudice that they went through that you're not going to go up there and make it. This is what my mother used to tell me and I carried it in my conscience. 'You are going to school and your father didn't go to school. And eventually you are going to have the same job as your father but he never had no education. So what good is your education?'" (1974:66).

²⁴Ogbu sometimes refers to these folk theories as "rules of behavior for achievement" (1981b:425).

success develops out of past experiences with cultural tasks, social rewards, and relative costs. The theory is either reinforced or altered by contemporary experiences, that is, by perceptions and interpretation of available opportunity structures" (Ogbu 1981b:420).²⁵ Thus blacks make a "cognitive adaptation" to their ecological niche (Ogbu 1993:495–96) and this adaptation is routinized in cognitive expectations.²⁶

In sum, blacks believe "that there exists an institutionalized discrimination against them. That is, consciously or unconsciously blacks perceived and analyzed their social and economic realities and seemed to have reached the conclusion that they probably could not make it by simply following the rules of behavior for achievement (e.g., going to school to get credentials) that worked for white people" (Ogbu 1991c:439). These are cognitive conclusions and they are codified in cognitive expectations that are enforced for the group. Such expectations should be transformed for middle-class blacks as they confront openings in their legitimate opportunity structure²⁷ and they would be transformed for inner-city blacks if their legitimate opportunity structure were opened (cf. Ogbu 1988:18).

The questions posed in the next section ask whether inner-city blacks can and will be desirous of taking advantage of legitimate opportunities should they become available. To benefit from new opportunities inner-city blacks must manifest the same cognitive capacities as whites and they must be motivated to avail themselves of available opportunities. The latter, at a collective level, requires that they be committed to values that are congruent with the dominant values present in U.S. society.

CAPACITIES, PERFORMANCES AND SOCIAL VALUES

Capacities and Performances

Ogbu argues that the "origins of human competencies—general and specific skills—lie in the nature of culturally defined adult tasks, such as the subsistence tasks of a given population; insofar as most adults in the population perform their sex-appropriate tasks competently as defined in the culture, it follows that most children in the population grow up as competent men and women" (1981b:417). Children are socialized into previously existing competencies (ibid.:418). Insofar as populations confront differing opportunity structures, the nature of these competencies differs between those various groups. Each set of social circumstances gives rise to a specific set of practical skills and those cognitive, communicative, and socioemotional competencies most compatible with it. Usually a given population values its instrumental competencies and emphasizes them when rearing its children (ibid.:421). Ogbu believes that "Certain populations possess unique instrumental competencies that meet their societal needs, and they adapt their child-rearing techniques to inculcate these needs" (ibid.:417).

According to Ogbu, the term "competence" is increasingly being used to identify persons who have mastered attributes associated with middle-class success in school and society

²⁵ Ogbu makes the following comments, in the same essay, when discussing his policy recommendations: "the most effective way to improve ghetto or minority school success is to increase and improve their conventional economic resources (e.g., provide more and better conventional jobs for youths and adults) to the point where (a) significant changes occur in perceptions of opportunity structures in the conventional economy, and (b) the street economy and associated survival strategies become less attractive" (1981b:426).

²⁶ Ogbu comments that "A folk model is developed from collective historical experiences of a given population; and the cultural model so constructed is sustained or modified by subsequent collective events or experiences in that universe. The cultural model has both instrumental and expressive dimensions" (1989b:185). His emphasis on the expressive dimension of the folk model leads him to conflate cognitive and normative expectations into cultural-deprivation arguments. I would, in contrast, contend that the expressive dimension of cognitive expectations leads to their reinforcement only insofar as they are perceived to be accurate reflections of the social relationships they characterize.

²⁷ Cf. Ogbu (1994:276–9; 1995), where he contends that the effects of black advancement have been less important than one might think because middle-class blacks have attained their positions via special programs, collective action, or civil rights struggles, not via individual competition.

(ibid.:413–14). In contrast, he defines “competence” as “the ability to perform a culturally specified task” (ibid.:414), and he adds that “ability,” when used in definitions of competence, refers to a set of skills that make it possible to perform specific tasks (ibid.). Unfortunately, this discussion is ambiguous, conflating capacities and performances/skills.

A cognitive capacity indicates the generalized ability to master a series of activities of a particular type. In Piaget’s work capacities are organized as a hierarchically ordered sequence of stages, where persons who have mastered more advanced capacities are capable of routinized performances categorized at that stage, as well as the facile mastery of skills categorized in earlier stages. Persons who have only mastered an earlier stage, however, are incapable of routinized performances cognate with later capacities.

These capacities emerge in the mastery of specific performances within particular types of social relationships. While the appropriate *types* of social relationship are virtually universal within American society—for example, relationships of peer cooperation and contention in adolescence, where formal operations (hypothetical and deductive thinking) emerge—the indices we utilize to measure cognitive capacities often show them to be correlated with various social variables, such as class and race. This is so because the indices too often measure performances that are more likely to be found in certain social and cultural positions than in others.²⁸

Ogbu draws on the work of Connolly and Bruner, who “give as an example of general skills ‘middle-class education,’ or the set of skills associated with technological management. This general skill includes ‘the capacity for combining information in a fashion that permits one to use flexibility; to go beyond the information given; to draw inferences about things yet to be encountered; and to connect and probe for connection’ (4). They call this ‘operative intelligence—*knowing how* rather than simply *knowing that*’ (3)” (Ogbu 1981b:414; quoting Connolly and Bruner 1974). This discussion illustrates the possible confusion inherent in the use of the term “competencies.” “Knowing how” is akin to Piaget’s formal operations, the capacity to think hypothetically and deductively. It may be mastered in a wide variety of performances, manifest in a wide variety of skills. It doesn’t represent any particular skill.²⁹

When Ogbu writes of competencies incongruent with those required to do well in school (Fordham and Ogbu 1986:179), it is not clear whether he is referring to capacities or performances. If taken to refer to the former, his contention implies a retarded cognitive development among blacks and the type of cultural-deprivation argument that he wants to reject. Ogbu comes close to this position when he contends that “In some populations, cultural tasks require a relatively high degree of formal operational thinking, and as a result this kind of thinking is valued and promoted. In other populations, cultural tasks do not call for much formal operational thinking, and it is apparently not highly valued and promoted” (1988:13; see also Connolly and Bruner 1974:5). Formal operational thinking is a cognitive capacity that may be mastered through a wide variety of performances; although certain performances may not be manifest among inner-city blacks, there is no reason to conclude from this that they have not, at age-appropriate times, mastered the capacity for formal operational thinking through the mastery of performances demanded within their social world.

²⁸ Flavell (1963) provides a cogent introduction to Piaget. There is a brilliant discussion of formal operations in Inhelder and Piaget (1958). Piaget provides his most detailed discussion of the social context for the emergence of cognitive capacities in Piaget ([1932]1962). Later Piagetian discussions that emphasize the social relationships within which cognitive development occurs can be found in Hinde, Perret-Clermont, and Stevenson-Hinde (1985) and Perret-Clermont (1980). My attempt to generalize Piaget’s stage sequence model as a theory of social development, emphasizing the social structures that constitute the stages, is found in Gould (1987:ch. 8).

²⁹ This criticism may be unfair to Connolly and Bruner. While they characterize competencies as skills, they distinguish between specific and general skills (quoted in Ogbu 1981b:414). The distinction between general and specific skills is not clear in Ogbu’s work.

Ogbu wants to argue that “attitudes and behaviors of black students, though different from those of white students, are not deviant or pathological but should be considered as a mode of adaptation necessitated by the ecological structure or effective environment of the black community. That is, the attitudes and behaviors which black children learn in this community as they grow up and which they bring to school are those required by and appropriate for the niche black Americans have traditionally occupied in the American corporate economy and racial stratification system” (Fordham and Ogbu 1986:179). In other words, behavioral adaptations, “competencies,” should be interpreted as skills and performances, not as capacities (and, here, I think, attitudes may be interpreted as cognitive expectations). Parents teach their children the skills they need within their social environment, but “The relativists are right in saying that inner-city black children acquire different, rather than deficient, instrumental competencies” (Ogbu 1978:207; see also 1985:66, 51; 1988:12; 1993:495–96.).

The performances that inner-city persons master differ from those mastered by middle-class whites and blacks, but the capacities they master are the same. This congruence in capacity and divergence of performance is sometimes explicit in Ogbu’s observations: “the ghetto child’s later experiences in the street are probably just as important in shaping his adult instrumental cognitive, linguistic, motivational, socio-emotional, and practical competencies as his early childhood experiences in the home. For example, no one who has observed or studied hustlers and pimps in the ghetto will deny that they possess the general skills or operative intelligence—‘*knowing how*’ rather than simply *knowing that*’—which Connolly and Bruner attribute to the white middle class” (1981b:416). This mastery of formal operations suggests that blacks from the inner city have the capacity to succeed in school, to master the performances required in high school and college. If given the opportunity to succeed, inner-city persons should be *capable* of doing so.³⁰

There are two possible caveats to this contention. The mastery of formal operations emerges within egalitarian peer relationships. Although there is some evidence that peer relationships within the inner city facilitate the mastery of skills that lead to the emergence of the capacity for hypothetical and deductive thinking,³¹ it isn’t clear what consequences ghetto disorganization might engender. If inner cities become so disorganized that stable peer relationships are put in peril, the presumption that inner-city youngsters develop the same cognitive capacities as their middle-class peers might be called into question.

The second caveat concerns the question of whether inner-city persons are committed to success in ways approved of from within middle-class values. To answer this question successfully, I must first differentiate between social and cultural norms.

Social and Cultural Norms

Social norms constitute “right/wrong” distinctions. They narrow the creativity permissible within the context of culturally mediated interaction, thus reducing the complexity of interaction. Cultural norms define action as intelligible or not; these expectations entail ways of acting that make sense and ways of making sense of the ways people act. They are systems of meaning that work like a deep structure in a generative theory. In Durkheim’s terms, violations of social norms define actors as delinquent, while violation of cultural

³⁰ This doesn’t mean that these capacities will be realized in mainstream activities; for blacks “racial barriers have traditionally forced such ‘intelligent’ ghetto people to apply their competencies to the management of activities in a ‘street economy’ rather than in the conventional, corporate economy” (Ogbu 1981b:416).

³¹ “Early induction into street culture ensures a prolonged interaction with peers and street adults, which enhances the child’s development into adaptive adult categories. . . . School adds to this development by providing a setting for peer-group formation and participation as well as through its classification of children into educables and non-educables and subsequent treatment whereby the latter are driven into early encapsulation in peer and street cultures” (Ogbu 1981b:421). In addition to the sources Ogbu cites, see the path-breaking discussion in Labov (1972: ch. 5).

norms define actors as deranged (Durkheim [1912]1965:30 and fn. 20; see also Gould [forthcoming]).

Cultural norms define a particular logic within which individuals act more or less creatively, within the limits of their personalities and social roles; they define the shared structures of meaning, what phenomenologists call the life-world, we must postulate to understand performances. Basil Bernstein provides a cogent definition of a cultural role: "a constellation of shared learned meanings, through which an individual is able to enter into persistent, consistent and recognized forms of interaction with others. A [cultural] role is thus a complex coding activity controlling the creation and organization of specific meanings *and* the conditions for their transmission" (1974:125).

A group's "culture" refers to the structures of meaning that constitute its identity. Cultural norms regulate (legitimate or not) social values, favoring those consistent with the group's understanding of itself. But this regulation may also account for and rationalize violations of moral obligations in situations where conformity makes little sense. For example, in situations where cognitive expectations contradict social values, a type of normative expectation, where the ability to implement social values appears to be improbable, it may *make sense* to conform to the former instead of the latter.

In what follows I turn to a discussion of social values, a form of social norm blacks share with the majority white community; later, in the section dealing with "Structural Discrimination," we will discover the importance of black cultural identity, which is sometimes defined in opposition to the white community (see also Gould 1997).

Social Values in the Inner-city

Ogbu emphasizes that inner-city blacks develop different rules of behavior for achievement than do middle-class whites. He sometimes suggests that these rules are what we have referred to as normative expectations, resistant even in the face of transformed opportunity structures. I have questioned that contention, though I do believe that there must be a particular type of normative orientation institutionalized in the inner city if we expect ghetto residents to take advantage of proffered opportunities. They must be committed to a set of conventional social values that make those opportunities instrumental to the attainment of respectable social goals. If these values are manifest in the inner city, they must have been maintained even while the possibility of their implementation was very small. If they exist, it is evidence that they are resistant to transformation, even in the face of an opportunity structure that has been closed for a very considerable period of time.³²

Although this contention that values may be maintained even when not capable of implementation is contradicted by Wilson's belief that norms are adaptations to the situations in which their bearers live, it is congruent with many of his actual claims and the thrust of his arguments. He wants, for example, to counter culture-of-poverty arguments that "blame the victim" and see decline in the inner city as a consequence of the moral failing of its residents: "Those who have been pushing moral-cultural or individualistic-behavioral explanations of the social dislocations that have swept through the inner city in recent years have created a fictitious normative divide between urban blacks that, no matter its reality—which has yet to be ascertained—cannot but pale when compared to the objective structural cleavage that separates ghetto residents from the larger society and to the collective material constraints that bear on them" (Wacquant and Wilson 1989a:25). Wilson's recent work suggests that the normative divide, at least in regard to social values, is not as great as we might presume from an examination of social activities within the inner city. In *When Work Disappears* Wilson argues that "The available research suggests

³²I have explicated my understanding of the relationship between normative and situational variables in a number of places (e.g., Gould 1981; 1986; 1987:ch. 4).

that the total culture of the inner-city ghetto includes ghetto-related elements, but it also includes a predominance of mainstream elements" (1996:67). Black "residents in inner-city ghetto neighborhoods actually verbally endorse, rather than undermine, the basic American values concerning individual initiative" (ibid.:179). They support the work ethic (ibid.:xix), believing that hard work is important for getting ahead (ibid.:67, 179–80). Most of those on welfare prefer work to welfare and Wilson tells us that "permanent welfare is anathema to them" (ibid.:166). Finally, while his interviewees focused on the racial segregation, class subordination and social isolation they confront, they support mainstream family and educational values (ibid.:xvii).³³ Although Wilson doesn't articulate the notion of obligations retained in the face of disappointment, surely these comments must refer to such values.³⁴

Social values, which are one type of normative expectation, define actions as obligatory and, at the same time, desirable. It is important to emphasize the difference between *desired* and *desirable*. The former refers to what is wanted, to an actor's situational goals, the latter to the moral values that regulate the selection of norms, goals, and facilities. While what is desired and desirable may overlap, they need not be the same and they can be contradictory. Sometimes actors in particular situations define goals that are inconsistent with their values. It would not be surprising theoretically to find that persons in a situation where the opportunity to implement their values was absent would act in ways that appeared to contradict those values.³⁵ Somewhat differently, it would not be surprising to find them adopting illegitimate means, means incongruent with their values, in an attempt to implement them. This contention is the fundamental insight embedded in Merton's discussions of anomie.³⁶ Merton believed that lower-class persons in the United States shared the values institutionalized in the larger society, but their class position limited their legitimate opportunities to implement those values.³⁷

This perspective is implicit in much of Ogbu's work and explicit in his first book. There, after summarizing Merton and Cloward and Ohlin, he writes that "The main thesis of this book [his own book, *The Next Generation*] is that the high proportion of school failures among subordinate minorities is both a reaction and an adaptation to the limited opportunity available to them from their education" (1974:12). This "anomie," which is

³³These contentions are reinforced in a recent essay in which Wilson claims that people interviewed in the inner city support the values of work, family, and education and that whether employed or not, most inner-city residents support the norms of the work ethic. This is the case even though most adults in many inner-city neighborhoods are unemployed at any point in time (Wilson 1995:11, 17; I thank him for sending me a xerox of this essay.) The commitment of the majority of blacks, including most inner-city poor, to the "American Creed" is also clear in the data presented in Hochschild (1995).

³⁴This view is not necessarily contrary to his previous assertion that inner-city residents have "become increasingly isolated from mainstream patterns and norms of behavior" (Wilson 1987:8). It depends on the type of "norms of behavior" to which he was referring; it is possible, for example, that black English vernacular has diverged from standard English and that other expressions of cultural meaning have diverged from the "white cultural norm," while the values of inner-city residents have remained more or less congruent with the values of the larger society. (On the distinction between social and cultural norms, see the section entitled "Social and Cultural Norms.") It is also possible for cognitive expectations to diverge, while normative expectations remain more or less congruent.

³⁵This is exactly what Wilson finds to be the case in the inner city: "They [black inner-city residents] may strongly agree with mainstream judgments of unacceptable behavior and yet feel utterly constrained by their circumstances, forced sometimes to act in ways that violate mainstream norms. Outsiders may observe their overt behavior and erroneously assume that they regard this illegitimate income as rightful" (1996:69; see also p. 70). Wilson makes the same point about work, welfare, and the commitment to individual achievement (ibid.:67, 166, 181).

³⁶The literature on the relationship between anomie and deviance is voluminous. Merton's most important contributions are found in Merton (1964) and Merton ([1949][1957]1968). The most important discussion remains Cloward and Ohlin (1960). My attempt to explain deviance is found in chapter three of Gould (1987).

³⁷I have criticized Merton's formulation in my reconsideration of the relationship between general and middle-range theory (Gould 1990a, 1990b). Ogbu, like Merton, often confuses goals, which define what is desired and are situationally specific, with values, which define what is desirable and obligatory and transcend specific situations.

equivalent to what Smelser calls strain at the level of facilities, inadequate facilities to obtain socially defined goals, is clearly present in the inner city, where it is supplemented by strain at the level of goals, which “involves a relation between responsible performances in roles and the rewards which accrue thereby” (Smelser 1962:14). One form of goal strain may be conceptualized as relative deprivation. A group of actors will feel relatively deprived when they receive fewer rewards than members of a reference group for what they feel are comparable performances.³⁸ Both of these strains presume that the actors under examination share the values of the larger society, at least insofar as these values regulate what is desired and mandate equal rewards for equal performances.³⁹

The tenor of Ogbu's characterization of the value commitments of inner-city blacks is found in the dedication of his first book to the poor blacks and Chicanos he studied in Stockton, California: “To . . . all Burghersiders, who so much desire education for their children because they themselves never had the opportunity” (Ogbu 1974). His subjects⁴⁰ valued “the same things middle-class people want, including good education, good jobs and good wages, and better living conditions” (ibid.:7).⁴¹ Even though they often do poorly in school, inner-city blacks express a strong wish to succeed academically (Ogbu 1989a:102; 1992a:288).⁴² Parents and children agree that a good education and good school credentials are prerequisites for good jobs. Children indicate that parents encourage them to get a good education and to do well in school. Of the one hundred junior and senior high school students Ogbu surveyed, 99 percent wanted to graduate from high school, 53 percent wanted to earn a college degree, and 34 percent wanted postgraduate training (1983:178–79; 1991b:251–52).⁴³ These hopes are, as the children suggest, inculcated by many parents: “I want [my children—J. O.] to get as much education as they possibly can. If it takes me eating bread and beans for the rest of my life to see that they have education, that's what it'll take” (Ogbu 1991b:251, quoting one of his informants; 1992a:288).

When Ogbu informs us that inner-city theories of success differ from those of the white middle class, he isn't suggesting that what is valued differs, simply that the different availability of legitimate opportunities generates different cognitive exceptions in the inner city (Ogbu 1981b:424; 1985:57; 1993:495). What differs is the opportunity of inner-city

³⁸ “[T]hey [involuntary minorities like inner-city blacks] compare their status with that of the members of the dominant group and usually conclude that they are worse off than they ought to be for no other reason than that they belong to a subordinate and disparaged minority group” (Ogbu 1974:12–13; see also 14–15, 66–67, 98, 99; 1978:196; 1987:331; 1989b:190; 1990:52; 1991a:14; 1991b:279–80; 1992b:10, 11).

I have argued that the deviance associated with strain at the level of facilities is akin to Merton's deviant innovation, a rational and utilitarian deviance to obtain the facilities necessary to accomplish social goals. The deviance associated with goal strain is deviant aggression, a nonutilitarian attack on property and person. There are also deviant responses to strain at the level of norms (deviant conflict) and strain at the level of values (deviant retreatism). The complete theory is presented in Gould (1987:ch. 3).

³⁹ In the next section I provide a brief characterization of U.S. values at a very high level of generality (which is more comprehensively discussed in Gould [1992b]); here I focus on Ogbu's discussion of the educational and occupational commitments he found in his study of poor residents in Stockton, California.

⁴⁰ It isn't always clear to whom and to what period Ogbu is referring in the articles that follow his 1974 and 1978 books. He does, however, tell us the following in a 1989 article: “Although the initial study [in Stockton] was concluded in 1970, I continued to update through occasional field visits for specific events and through supervision of 4 doctoral dissertations by native Stocktonians who studied with me at Berkeley or some nearby university” (Ogbu 1989a:117). Most often, however, he appears to be drawing on fieldwork from 1968 to 1970. In consequence it isn't necessarily the case that his comments are applicable to inner-city blacks in the urban Northeast and upper Midwest in the 1990s.

⁴¹ Education was, apparently, valued as a means to a good job, as a vehicle to escape poverty (Ogbu 1989a:106; 1989b:194–5). It was clearly perceived as a prerequisite to getting ahead (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Ogbu 1974; 1987:325; 1991a:24; 1993:495), and, further, “blacks appear to accept the assumption underlying the white status mobility system—namely, that recruitment into and remuneration and advancement in the job hierarchy should be based on educational credentials” (Ogbu 1991b:279).

⁴² Ogbu contrasts this commitment to schooling with the rejection of schooling Willis found among working-class students in the United Kingdom (Ogbu 1989a:106).

⁴³ This is strong evidence for the veracity of Ogbu's informants' claim that they “wish that they could get ahead according to the conventional strategy of using school credentials” (Ogbu 1989b:188; see also 1990:49; 1991a:14; 1991b:265; 1991c:446).

blacks to implement these values and thus the cognitive expectations and actual activities that they manifest.

Black parents in Stockton teach their children ambivalent attitudes toward school. While they espouse the need for their children to work hard in school and surpass the parents's own educational attainments, their own life experiences of unemployment and underemployment, discrimination, and, more generally, the nature of their life in the home and community, suggest that even if the children succeed in school, they may not make it as adults in the larger society. Eventually, Ogbu believes, children may become disillusioned and give up, blaming "the system" for their own failure in school, just as their parents blame "the system" for their own failures (Ogbu 1974:98, 100; 1981a:149; 1989b:193).⁴⁴ This mixed message partially explains the "paradox of high educational aspirations but low academic performance" (Ogbu 1989a:102). "Involuntary minorities [including inner-city blacks] emphasize the importance of education in expressing their folk theory of getting ahead but this verbal endorsement is not usually accompanied by the necessary effort. This discrepancy is attributable in part to the fact that historically involuntary minorities did not get the same opportunity to benefit from their education as members of the dominant group with respect to jobs, wages and other working conditions" (Ogbu 1991a:24). The lack of effort increases as students get older and become even more aware of their limited opportunities (*ibid.*:26; 1989b:195).

Blacks are committed to education as a means to conventional success, just as they are committed to succeed in conventional ways. Confronting a closed legitimate opportunity structure, they develop cognitive expectations about the possibility of succeeding⁴⁵ and further cognitive expectations about how they must act if they are to succeed in their, too often illegitimate, opportunity structures.⁴⁶ As long as the commitment to conventional values remains intact, and only for so long as that commitment remains intact, inner-city blacks, as a group, will avail themselves of legitimate, in preference to illegitimate, opportunities, if and when those opportunities are widely enough available to affect group, rather than anomalous individual, aspirations. The next section provides a partial explanation of why these legitimate opportunities are so scarce.

THE NEW RACISM

Wilson has emphasized his belief "that historic discrimination is far more important than contemporary discrimination in explaining the plight of the ghetto underclass" (1987:32–33; see also p. 141). The concentration of poor blacks in the inner city, a consequence of past discrimination and migration, has made them vulnerable to structural changes in the U.S. economy (*ibid.*:34; 1994b:252). The outmigration of better-off blacks and whites, the increase in poverty among ghetto residents, and the immigration of the poor into the inner city (1994b:256, 270–71, n. 9; 1996:42), has lead to an increased concentration of poverty and to social disorganization within the ghetto (*cf.*, Massey and Denton 1993 and Wilson 1994a). Without taking issue with these contentions, I want to argue that the decline in (labor-market) racism that Wilson recognizes ([1978]1980) refers to the hierarchical rac-

⁴⁴"In addition, the parents appeared to be giving children contradictory messages about education. On the one hand they strongly admonished them to get a good education in order to get good jobs. On the other hand they also taught the children that Stockton did not reward blacks and whites equally for similar educational accomplishments" (Ogbu 1989a:125).

⁴⁵"The situation is paradoxical, however, for when blacks are questioned directly they usually respond like white Americans, namely, that to get ahead one needs a good education. On the other hand, other evidence suggests that they do not really believe that they have an equal chance with white Americans to get ahead through education" (Ogbu 1987:325; 1989a:111).

⁴⁶In this situation we would expect that deviance from these cognitive orientations would be sanctioned (Ogbu 1991a:22; 1992a:291). Nonetheless these expectations should not be treated as social values; they represent, instead, an adaptation to a closed, legitimate opportunity structure.

ism that excluded blacks on explicitly racial grounds. It is my contention that hierarchical racism has been, to a considerable degree, replaced by a “new racism” grounded in egalitarian values.⁴⁷

In the context of Wilson’s work, we must ask why, if racism is more or less dormant, jobs have not moved into the inner city to take advantage of a pool of low-wage workers? Two of Wilson’s students have published research that begins to answer this question and Wilson has himself reprised this research in *When Work Disappears*. Kirschenman and Neckerman interviewed employers in the Chicago area, generally the “highest ranking official at the establishment,” about “‘the most typical entry-level position’ in the firm’s modal occupational category—sales, clerical, skilled, semiskilled, unskilled, or service, but excluding managerial, professional, and technical” (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991:206). These employers were quite frank in explaining why they didn’t like hiring blacks, especially poor, inner-city blacks. They were so frank, in fact, that Kirschenman and Neckerman wrote that “A standard rule of discourse is that some things are acceptable to say and others are better left unsaid. Silence had the capacity to speak volumes. Thus we were overwhelmed by the degree to which Chicago employers felt comfortable talking with us—in a situation where the temptation would be to conceal rather than reveal—in a negative manner about blacks” (ibid.:207). The employers that Kirschenman and Neckerman interviewed clearly felt that it was acceptable to make the types of negative comments that were repeated ad nauseam to the interviewers. What we must understand is that for the employers these comments were not racist, but simply the enunciation of “facts.”

The employers characterized black workers as lazy, dishonest, unmotivated, unpunctual, lacking in initiative, unreliable, having a bad attitude, as well as unskilled and uneducated (ibid.:passim; see also Wilson 1996:ch. 5).⁴⁸ They adopted a variety of devices to exclude black workers, ranging from hiring based on the referrals of current employees to targeting newspaper ads to nonblack neighborhoods (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991:208, 210). They couldn’t conceive of relocating to the inner city, both because their current workers wouldn’t work there due to safety concerns and because they saw no alternative supply of labor in the inner city (ibid.:215). Not only was the idea of relocating in the inner city unpalatable, but “Several firms in [their] sample were relocating or seriously considering a move to the South in a search for cheap skilled labor. Employers of less skilled labor can find an ample supply of applicants, but many complained that it was becoming more difficult to find workers with basic skills and a good work ethic” (ibid.:208).

As Wilson suggests, in comments on the Kirschenman and Neckerman study, “only a few employers explicitly expressed racist attitudes or a categorical loathing of blacks” (Wilson 1991–92:647–8). Instead, many employers implied or suggested that they were simply facing facts. They didn’t see themselves as obligated to hire inferior workers (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991:208–9), and they viewed blacks as inferior workers (ibid.:212).

⁴⁷The theoretical grounding for the following argument comes from Gould (1992b). That essay might be profitably compared to Bobo and Smith (1998). I want to thank Professor Bobo for sending me a prepublication manuscript of this essay.

⁴⁸I’ve drawn a distinction between the two sets of characteristics because Kirschenman and Neckerman tell us, here referring to sales and customer service jobs, that “job skills and specific work experience were relatively unimportant. How workers look, talk, and interact with customers or clients were clearly more important. As one respondent said, ‘A cheerful person can get by with fewer skills’” (1991:218–19, referring to Table 1). They add, a bit later in their discussion, “And when retail employers told us that appearance, communications skills, and personality were important, they may have been giving us code words for white skin or white styles of interaction. Sales employers who said they valued communication skills or ability to deal with the public hired fewer blacks and Hispanics than those who did not” (ibid.:221). “Like sales and customer service employers, most employers of low-skilled blue-collar and service workers do not require job skills (see Table I). In fact, several employers said explicitly that they valued trainability over experience. One looked for a ‘bright’ job applicant, one with an attitude that ‘I don’t have any of the basic skills but I can learn them in a hurry’” (ibid.:225).

There is reason, however, to be skeptical about the quality of the experience upon which such conclusions are based. Often, if one reads closely, one finds that the experience is, at best, second hand (*ibid.*:221). Often it seems as if the characterization of blacks is a conclusion from the fact that blacks have difficulty getting jobs (*ibid.*:227). It's not so much that blacks don't get jobs because they are lazy; employers know that they are lazy because they don't get jobs.⁴⁹ As Wilson comments, "these problems [joblessness and deepening poverty among inner-city blacks] tend to be viewed by members of the larger society as a reflection of personal deficiencies not structural inequities" (1994b:265–66; see also 1996:159–60).⁵⁰

Ogbu reinforces this contention: "The point to stress is that the dismal performance of minorities in employment appeared to provide an objective support for the job ceiling, thereby reinforcing white stereotypes concerning the intellectual inferiority of blacks" (1989a:124).⁵¹ When whites (and some blacks) believe that the status-mobility system "is an open system in which everyone with necessary educational credentials or 'qualifications' can achieve self-advancement or join 'the mainstream[.]' [t]he under representation of minorities in the more desirable job categories may then be explained as due to their individual or collective faults. . . . Any relative lack of school success on the part of the minorities might be attributed to some 'cultural, language, social or genetic' disadvantage of the minorities" (Ogbu 1983:174–75). As Ogbu writes elsewhere, in America "People who are successful are praised as being ambitious, imaginative, industrious, persevering, talented, and the like; those who are not successful are blamed as lacking in these qualities. It is also believed that every American has equal opportunity and that any individual with ability can succeed not only in school but also in society. To seek to 'upgrade' oneself is held to be morally good and the proof of this 'upward orientation' lies in success. Conversely, it is morally bad not to seek to 'upgrade' oneself and failure is the proof that one has not" (1974:4).

If whites believe that blacks not only should have an equal opportunity but already do have an equal opportunity, as the majority do (Kluegel and Smith 1986), the failure of blacks to succeed (in employment or education) is "evidence" that there is something

⁴⁹There is another reason to be skeptical about the employers' comments: they often differentiate between blacks in general and "our blacks." The latter, the blacks who actually work at their firms, are valued employees (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991:228, 231). As Wilson notes, "racial stereotyping is greater among employers with lower proportions of blacks in their workforce—especially blue-collar employers, who tend to stress the importance of qualities, such as work attitudes, that are difficult to measure in a job interview" (1996:111). Further, "Many employers often develop negative opinions of black male workers in the absence of previous firsthand experience" (*ibid.*:122).

⁵⁰Wilson's discussion of this data set is ambiguous. To acknowledge the employers' comments as "racist" would undermine his repeated contention that labor-market discrimination is an insignificant impediment for younger blacks. Perhaps in consequence he makes comments like the following: "The degree to which this perception [that inner-city blacks are less desirable as workers] is based on racial bias or represents an objective assessment of worker qualifications is not easy to determine" (1996:111). He makes such comments even though he disputes many of the employers' contentions, for example, that inner-city blacks don't have a good work ethic. Wilson emphasizes that black employers share many of the perceptions of white employers; they too express negative views of the job-related traits of inner city black workers (*ibid.*:129–32). Wilson is reluctant to see these black employers as "racist" (*ibid.*:129–30), and, in consequence, unwilling to label their white peers as racist.

A main thrust of his discussion is to emphasize that employers don't recognize discrimination as a significant factor in their decision making. "When asked the reason for the high levels of unemployment in Chicago's inner-city neighborhoods, only 4 percent of the 179 employers mentioned discrimination. Indeed, employers tend to dismiss the charge of discrimination, even though some of their statements indicate that it does exist" (*ibid.*:127). This is my central point; these employers don't see themselves as (hierarchical) racists; they see themselves as facing facts: "In addition to the belief that many formal claims of racial discrimination in the workplace are unjustified, there was also the feeling among respondents that if an employer avoids hiring inner-city workers, it has more to do with concerns about performance and safety than with prejudice against a person because of skin color. As an inner-city employer put it: 'I do not believe that it is the result of blatant racism. I do not believe that. I think that it is the result of experience on the part of the employer communities'" (*ibid.*:128).

⁵¹The context for this remark is a discussion of occupational testing. I will return to the importance of employment tests as screening devices in the next section.

wrong with blacks. Consider the following analogy: social scientists measure employment discrimination by controlling statistically for all attributes that might be relevant to differential productivity. Most view the residual wage gap between blacks and whites as the maximum labor-market discrimination present in the system. More consistently, however, within their models, which focus on the attributes of individuals, they might view this as the residual difference in productivity between economically homogeneous blacks and whites.⁵² As Kirschenman and Neckerman note, employer characterizations of inner-city workers mirror those provided by some social scientists, only employers don't control for prelabor-market characteristics. Workers from the inner city are seen to be unskilled, uneducated, illiterate, dishonest, lacking initiative, unmotivated, involved with drugs and gangs, unstable, without a work ethic and lacking an understanding of work, without personal charm, and with no family life or role models (1991:208).⁵³

These conclusions are drawn consistently from the conjuncture of individualistic, egalitarian, achievement-oriented values institutionalized in the United States, the belief that blacks have a more or less equal opportunity to succeed, and the fact that in many areas of society blacks do less well than whites. Persons who are committed to these values erroneously attribute the relative success or failure of groups to the attributes of their individual members. A recognition of the consequences of applying these values to racially diverse groups in a liberal, capitalist society explains why persons who do not see themselves as racists discriminate against blacks and apply to blacks, as if they were making factual statements, pejorative epithets. Blacks must be lazy, dumb, or whatever negative epithet one wants to substitute,⁵⁴ because they don't succeed in a situation where, the employer believes, if she shares the beliefs of most in the United States, they have every opportunity to succeed. Rational employers will not hire blacks because they believe blacks are lazy and/or dumb. If we can demonstrate these beliefs (what I've called the "new racism") to be false, we can appropriately contend that they and the employment barriers that derive from them are partially responsible for the poverty we find in the inner city.

In the next section I will explore another reason why the racist conclusions we have just explored have credence in U. S. society and why they can be reproduced in the economy. This will require an exploration of the structural discrimination that hides behind facially neutral organizational structures.

STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION

Kirschenman and Neckerman characterize their findings as a manifestation of statistical discrimination, where employers use race as a surrogate for productivity related attributes that are costly to measure.⁵⁵ Contrary, however, to their agnostic position (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991:204), models of statistical discrimination require, when applied to a

⁵²The above assertions are argued in Gould (1992b), where I use neoclassical economic theory as a model of U.S. values, demonstrate the racist consequences embedded in neoclassical examinations of labor-market discrimination, and contend that the same type of racist consequences are derived from egalitarian values in the larger society.

⁵³These characterizations are widespread, and, as I noted above, are found among black employers in a slightly higher proportion (80 percent) than among white employers (74 percent) (Wilson 1996:130). One of Ogbu's collaborators found a similar response among the black high school girls she studied: "Like Rita, she [Katrina, a high achieving black student] believes that hard work on the part of Black Americans is the key to the elimination of economic and social differences between Black and White Americans, and, as noted above, she holds Black Americans primarily responsible for their present lower-class status because, in her mind, Black Americans are basically lazy" (Fordham 1988:71-72).

⁵⁴Many whites focus on a comparison between Asians and blacks and point to the lack of "family values" in the inner-city black community as an explanation for the high poverty rates one finds there. This is, of course, a recycled version of culture-of-poverty arguments.

⁵⁵Wilson accepts this characterization (1991:8; 1991-92:647-48; 1996:136-37).

competitive labor market, that the average wage gap between categories of workers mirror the average productivity gap between the groups of workers.⁵⁶ Thus statistical theories are successful only in explaining discrimination against outliers within the black community, those persons as or more productive than the average white. The theory predicts that these outliers will often not be hired, or will be hired at discounted wages (perhaps by placing them in a different job category from economically homogeneous whites), because of the cost of differentiating them from their black peers.

Kirschenman and Neckerman make a number of suggestions about how racism on the part of employers might “lead to perceived and actual productivity differences between groups, making statistical discrimination more likely. Social psychological evidence suggests that expectations about group differences in productivity may bias evaluation of job performance. These expectations may also influence job placement. In particular, workers of lower expected productivity may be given less on-the-job training” (1991:206).⁵⁷ While most of these points are well taken, they don’t get to the heart of the story. Kirschenman and Neckerman do, however, call attention to one aspect of the correct explanation for the persistence of labor-market discrimination in the face of competitive constraints: “Finally, and most important for our study, productivity is not an individual characteristic; rather, it is shaped by the social relations of the workplace. If these relations are strained because of tastes for discrimination on the part of the employer, supervisor, coworkers, or consumers, lower productivity may result. Thus what begins as irrational practice based on prejudice or mistaken beliefs may end up being rational, profit-maximizing behavior” (*ibid.*).

This argument presumes that structural discrimination is manifest as strains between black employees and employers, supervisors, coworkers, and/or consumers, and it suggests an important conclusion, that such strains may cause black workers to be less productive than economically homogeneous whites. The reason for the discrepancy in productivity is not due to residual, racial characteristics among the blacks, but to the nature of the organizations in which they work. These organizations may manifest forms of more or less overt prejudice and discrimination (disparate treatment).

More interesting, however, are organizations that “structurally discriminate” even though they are facially neutral towards black and white workers. These organizations treat both categories of workers the same, but the black workers who are economically homogeneous to their white counterparts function deficiently because the standard of neutrality institutionalized in the organization presumes the life-world, the tacit common-sense culture, of whites.

Here I am using “culture” to refer to the logic of intelligibility, sense/nonsense, that makes activities intelligible or not; I am *not* referring to social values (as are many who refer to a “culture of poverty”), which define certain actions as obligatory and desirable. In suggesting that blacks possess a different culture than whites in the United States, I do not mean to suggest that blacks cannot understand whites, even though, especially across class, misunderstandings do occur. Blacks in the United States tend to be bicultural. Rather, I am pointing to a failure of whites to understand blacks, and even more importantly, to the fact that whites often find manifestations of black culture distasteful and inappropriate. Since it is white cultural standards that dominate, these misunderstandings and negative

⁵⁶Kirschenman and Neckerman may be confusing a question about the theory, where their citation of Aigner and Cain (1977:177) is relevant, with one about the facts, where their citation of Bielby and Baron (1986) is relevant. Bulow and Summers (1986:398, n. 18) and Blau (1984:57) reinforce Aigner and Cain’s correct claim about the logic of the theory, which I have reproduced in the text. I have briefly characterized statistical theories of discrimination in Gould (1992a:1546–47).

⁵⁷This discussion is a bit confusing. If blacks, on average, are less productive than whites, paying blacks, on average, less than whites (in proportion to the differential in productivity) is not labor-market discrimination between groups on the part of the employer, even though individual blacks may be discriminated against.

judgments can have severe and profound consequences. This structural discrimination impinges on middle-class, as well as inner-city blacks, and is, in consequence, relevant to answering Ogbu's question: Why do middle-class blacks appear to perform less well educationally than their white counterparts?

Too often blacks must shed themselves of their black cultural identities to succeed in "white organizations." Take, for example, the titles of two articles by Ogbu and one of his collaborators: "Racelessness as a Factor in Black Students' School Success: Pragmatic Strategy or Pyrrhic Victory," and "Black Students' School Success: Coping with the 'Burden of 'Acting White'''" (Fordham 1988; Fordham and Ogbu 1986). To succeed in school, Fordham and Ogbu argue, black students must adopt a raceless, in fact a white, persona. Compare this conclusion with the comments of some of the employers studied by Kirschenman and Neckerman: "Another respondent, who screens out most job applicants on the telephone on the basis of their 'grammar and English,' defended his methods: 'I have every right to say that that's a requirement for this job. I don't care if you're pink, black, green, yellow, or orange, I demand someone who speaks well. You want to tell me that I'm a bigot, fine, call me a bigot. *I know blacks, you don't even know they're black.* So do you'" (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991:223, my italics). Good blacks have white souls: "I think it's primarily what I mentioned—the cultural thing. *We have a couple of black workers—a friend of mine, one of the black secretaries who's been here several years, said, 'Well they're black but their soul is white' and, because culturally, they're white.* They do not have black accents. They do not—I think the accent is a big part of it. If someone—it doesn't matter—if someone is black but they speak with the same accent as a Midwestern white person, it completely changes the perception of them. And then dress is part of it. So, you're dealing with what is almost more socioeconomic prejudice than purely racial prejudice" (ibid.:224, quoting one of their interviewees).⁵⁸ To be hired (ibid.:228, 231. Italics mine.), and to succeed on the job, blacks had to, as much as possible, act like whites and to disassociate themselves from blacks.⁵⁹

This demand means that black performances, manifestations of the social and cultural relationships within which they live, as blacks, are devalued within the white workplace. Listen to another employer, who "believed that the styles of interaction characteristic of many blacks were out of place in the business world: 'There's a certain type of repartee that goes on between black guys; even in this building you see it. We have a security guard and couple of his friends that come in. I'm real uncomfortable with that. You know. I do my best to realize it's a cultural thing, but I don't like it, I don't think it's being professional, and I don't think it's the right atmosphere for a building'" (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991:223–24).

Mastery of the same capacities that comparable whites demonstrate isn't enough, because capacities are assessed through the measurement of cultural attributes more concentrated in white populations. Many of the cultural attributes used to screen and/or evaluate workers aren't skills like the ability to read and comprehend texts, which may be required for blacks to be economically homogeneous with competing whites, but skills that facilitate job performance because of the fit between applicant and organization, when the organization could just as well be organized in terms of the black applicants' culture.

⁵⁸ As Kirschenman and Neckerman make clear, such comments often conflate class, address (in the inner city), and race (1991:224, 231; see also 217).

⁵⁹ These same blacks often have hidden lives, away from work, with black friends. The first paragraph in the preface of a recent book on the racism confronted by *middle-class blacks* includes the following comment, quoted from an informant: "We have to be one way in our communities and one way in the workplace or in the business sector. We can never be ourselves all around" (Feagin and Sikes 1994:vii; see also, Cose (1993).

Kirschenman and Neckerman, in consonance with statistical discrimination theory, believe that racial stereotypes “influence hiring decisions most when there are few other indicators of an applicant’s ability” (ibid.:229). They interpret some of their data (ibid.:230, Table 2) to suggest that “Whether basic skills requirements for less skilled workers are important for the job or simply help the employer screen out applicants with undesirable personal qualities is irrelevant; what matters is that these criteria give the employer objective information about the applicant that supplements the fact of skin color” (ibid.:229). Perhaps, but this type of argument may ignore the possible adverse consequences to blacks when employers use facially neutral screening devices in selecting employees. Some blacks are aware of these discriminatory consequences: Ogbu comments that blacks see employee screening tests “not as a device to enable them to get jobs or get ahead but rather as a device to keep them down; that is, as a device for excluding them from gainful employment, especially above the job ceiling” (Ogbu 1989a:124).⁶⁰

By law, screening devices with adverse consequences for protected groups are illegal unless related to job performance. Unfortunately, making screening devices that result in the adverse treatment of blacks illegal may not resolve the crucial problem, which is that many organizations are structurally discriminatory despite the appearance of neutrality. In consequence, screening devices might predict job performance because the structure of the firm, even though facially neutral, is itself discriminatory.⁶¹ The task then is to restructure the organization of the firm, not the screening devices. Educational and employment organizations must be restructured to enable them to draw on the skills, performances, and cultural attributes of black and white (men and women, Asian and Latino) workers; in so doing, preconceptions will be challenged, learning will increase, and productivity will be enhanced.

There is one obvious objection to this type of argument. Some might point out that the United States is a country of immigrants, each group bringing to our shores different cultural orientations. Most of these groups have been integrated successfully into mainstream organizations. Why not blacks? Here Ogbu comes to our assistance. He emphasizes that black culture is not only different, it is oppositional. “One reason they [involuntary minorities, including blacks in the United States] do not overcome their initial difficulties as easily as the immigrants is that they have greater difficulty crossing cultural/language boundaries due to the oppositional nature of their cultural frame of reference and identity. *Thus, unlike the immigrants, involuntary minorities [sic] [including blacks] perceive the cultural differences they encounter in school as markers of identity to be maintained, not as barriers to be overcome*” (Ogbu 1987:330. Italics in original.).

Blacks are less willing than have been most voluntary immigrants to give up their culturally constructed identity. This identity was, as Ogbu emphasizes, a product of adap-

⁶⁰One possible indication of the strength of the structural discrimination black employees face in Chicago is the fact that “The data reveal that city employers, that is, those firms within the city of Chicago—who apply skills tests have a higher average proportion of black workers in entry-level jobs than do those who do not use these tests, even when one takes into consideration the size of the firm, the occupation, and the percentage of blacks in the neighborhood” (Wilson 1996:133). Skills tests often, as Ogbu’s subjects recognize, screen out black applicants, who, *ceteris paribus*, tend to do less well on such tests. In the Chicago data, cultural differences appear to be an even more powerful source of discrimination.

⁶¹I have examined the law, prior to the 1991 Civil Rights Act, in Gould (1992a:1562–78). I conclude, after examining the theoretical consequences of a sociological reconstruction of the economic underpinnings of the law against labor-market discrimination, as well as recent Supreme Court Decisions, that “*An organizational form may have a disparate impact on economically homogeneous black and white workers, and when it does, that organizational form should be subject to legal sanction. Disparate-impact theory should not only be reinstated as a check on facially neutral hiring practices [as it was with the Civil Rights Act of 1991], it should be extended to include facially neutral organizational forms that discriminate*” (ibid.:1574–75. Italics in original.). I discuss some more general philosophical aspects of this contention in Gould (1996b) and examine Richard Epstein’s arguments in opposition to laws prohibiting labor-market discrimination in Gould (1995).

tive strategies required to survive in conditions of severe oppression (1981b:425). More recently black pride derivative from the Civil Rights movement has reinforced the importance of maintaining, reproducing, and developing this heritage.

Despite what Ogbu's characterization of this oppositional culture implies, I do not see it as the source of deficient black performance. Their culture marks blacks as different, and this difference is a source of the structural discrimination they encounter. It is the structural discrimination that can turn the difference into a deficiency. Insofar as inner-city blacks adopt an orientation that motivates them to perform less well than comparable whites, this is due to a cognitive adaptation to the opportunity structures they confront (Gould 1992a:1558–62; 1995, section 3Db); the revision of these cognitive expectations in the face of improved opportunities is compatible with the culture that marks blacks as different. Their oppositional culture is consistent with the mastery of the cognitive capacities required to perform satisfactorily in a modern economy, with a normative commitment to mainstream, achievement-oriented values, and with a cognitive orientation to success, when opportunities are available.

Insofar as we, whatever our identity, value the choice to preserve black culture, and/or insofar as we can do nothing morally legitimate to alter it, to create blacks with white cultural attributes (under the possibly false presumption that this would eliminate discrimination against them), it is incumbent on us to recognize the need to restructure educational and employment practices to accommodate cultural differences, to create organizations that don't translate such differences into deficiencies. To do so requires the construction of equitable organizations. Unlike egalitarian organizations that treat all persons as if they were the same, equitable organizations treat people who are the same (in terms of their capacities) differently, to maximize equality.⁶² They are structured to take advantage of the different performances that various people with the same capacity bring into the group. In accounting for and in evaluating difference positively they make it possible for economically homogeneous workers of all sorts to be equally productive.⁶³

CONCLUSION

This essay, in seeking to understand and explain the activities of black Americans (particularly as represented in the work of Wilson and Ogbu) has pointed to the following distinct aspects of a social structure: (1) the real opportunity structure, (2) the set of *cognitive expectations* that emerge in adaptation to this opportunity structure, (3) the set of social values and norms (types of *normative expectation*) found in the inner-city black community, which are usually referred to in discussions of the "culture" of poverty, and (4) the nature of the *culture* (in the sense of cultural logics constituting sense and nonsense, and group identity). Simplifying greatly we might suggest that in the inner city legitimate opportunity structures are nearly closed, cognitive expectations signal this closure and often lead to low effort, while inner-city social values are most often middle class, egalitarian, and achievement oriented. The dominant cultural logic, which contains cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions, is oppositional.

Inner-city blacks are not stuck in a "culture of poverty." Instead, the value commitments that most maintain are congruent with mainstream values, while the cognitive expectations they have formulated in response to their opportunity structures are accurate and

⁶²I have discussed equity in many forums, most recently in Gould (1996a, 1996b).

⁶³Demographic realities have forced many companies to move towards the accommodation of cultural differences grounded in race, ethnicity, and gender. These pressures will only increase in the future as the proportion of the labor force made up of white men shrinks.

functional.⁶⁴ If these opportunity structures were to change, creating mainstream opportunities for inner-city blacks, most are committed, because of their orthodox values, to adapting to those changes.

Inner-city blacks also have the cognitive capacity to adapt. The differences that separate them from the "majority" white community focus on cultural symbols and performances; these performances allow blacks, just as the cognate performances allow whites, to cognitively mature in a way that facilitates the emergence of what Piaget labels "formal operations." Blacks have the same capacity as whites, and inner-city blacks have the same capacity as middle-class whites and blacks, to master the particular skills necessary to succeed educationally and occupationally.

If blacks sometimes do not succeed, even when they appear to be given a fair chance, this may be due to the fact that facially neutral organizations often have an adverse impact on blacks. In treating blacks the same as whites, implementing universalistic standards that implicitly privilege white cultural attributes, they devalue the cultural performances that blacks bring to the organization, and, in consequence, economically homogeneous blacks may perform less well than their white counterparts. This does not represent a deficiency on the part of blacks, but a form of discrimination embedded in the organizational structure.

When whites make deprecatory remarks about blacks, these whites may believe that they are simply facing the facts. Given the belief of most whites that blacks should have an equal opportunity to compete, and given their belief that blacks do, in fact, have this equal opportunity, black failure can only be interpreted as a consequence of the failings of individual blacks, and, in the aggregate, of blacks as a group or black culture. This conclusion reinforces the belief of most whites that their organizations are neutral and fair.

To overcome the discrimination intrinsic to egalitarian organizational structures, and to transform these white beliefs, we must construct equitable organizations that incorporate blacks fairly. This means more than integrating blacks into white organizations. It means reconstructing those organizations to incorporate and value the cultural performances of all their members.

If blacks require this restructuring in ways not manifest by some other groups, it is because blacks have been more resistant to giving up the cultural attributes that have enabled them to survive in their social niche within U. S. society. Those of us who are not black should thank our black brothers and sisters for this resistance. It not only affords the possibility of preserving and advancing the black culture so important in the creation of much that is best and most distinctive in the United States, it affords the possibility of preserving and advancing other distinctive, nonblack cultural identities. These advances are possible only insofar as we all remain committed to the values that constitute our civil religion, even as we seek the equitable realization of our more general egalitarian commitments.⁶⁵ These advances are possible only insofar as our respective cultures facilitate the cognitive, social, and emotional maturation of each individual within them.

⁶⁴This situation might be clarified with an analogy drawn from the deviance literature. Persons in a situation of strain, with an open illegitimate opportunity structure, and a calculating orientation toward legal norms, are in a *subculture of deviance*. When a concrete opportunity to commit a deviant action is manifest, and when that action appears likely to benefit them, they will undertake it. Those who have routinized deviant activities by legitimating them are in a *deviant subculture*. Something analogous to the subculture of deviance characterizes many in the inner city. These persons adopt a calculating orientation to a variety of activities frowned on by mainstream society, but they are not committed to those activities. If given a legitimate opportunity structure, they would avail themselves of it. The number in the category analogous to a deviant subculture is much smaller. (The notion of a subculture of deviance is derived from Matza's critique of Cloward and Ohlin's formulation of the notion of a deviant subculture. I have, however, used the terms in a way that is consonant with my own theory (Cloward and Ohlin 1960; Gould 1987:80-87; Matza 1964).)

⁶⁵I discuss the relationship between equal opportunity and equitable values in Gould (1994, 1996a, 1996b).

The policies we must foster require the provision of opportunities at a macro level, for example, good jobs for persons in the inner city and for those newly threatened in rural areas and suburbia. They also require more microlevel policies, including the equitable reconstruction of our public schools and our economic organizations. Such policies will benefit all of us.

REFERENCES

- Aigner, Dennis J., and Glen G. Cain. 1977. "Statistical Theories of Discrimination in Labor Markets." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 30:175–87.
- Bellah, Robert N. 1970. *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World*. New York: Harper and Row.
- . *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*. New York: Seabury.
- Bellah, Robert N., and Phillip E. Hammond. 1980. *Varieties of Civil Religion*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.
- Bellah, Robert N., Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bernstein, Basil. 1974. *Class, Codes and Control: Theoretical Studies Towards a Sociology of Language*. New York: Schocken.
- Bielby, William T., and James N. Baron. 1986. "Men and Women at Work: Sex Segregation and Statistical Discrimination." *American Journal of Sociology* 91:759–99.
- Blau, Francine D. 1984. "Discrimination Against Women: Theory and Evidence." Pp. 53–89 in *Labor Economics: Modern Views*, edited by W. Darity. Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff.
- Blau, Peter M., and Otis Dudley Duncan. 1967. *The American Occupational Structure*. New York: Wiley.
- Bloom, Benjamin S., Allison Davis, and Robert Hess. 1965. *Compensatory Education For Cultural Deprivation*. New York: Hold.
- Bobo, Lawrence, and Ryan A. Smith. 1998. "From Jim Crow Racism to Laissez-Faire Racism: An Essay on the Transformation of Racial Attitudes in America." Pp. 182–220 in *Beyond Pluralism: Essays on the Conceptions of Groups and Identities in America*, edited by W. Katkin and A. Tyree. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Bulow, Jeremy, and Lawrence H. Summers. 1986. "A Theory of Dual Labor Markets with Application to Industrial Policy, Discrimination, and Keynesian Unemployment." *Journal of Labor Economics* 4:376–414.
- Clark, Kenneth. 1965. *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Cloward, Richard A., and Lloyd E. Ohlin. 1960. *Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs*. New York: Free Press.
- Connolly, Kevin, and Jerome Bruner. 1974. "Competence: Its Nature and Nurture." Pp. 3–7 in *The Growth of Competence*, edited by K. Connolly and J. Bruner. London: Academic Press.
- Cose, Ellis. 1993. *The Rage of a Privileged Class*. New York: Harper.
- Durkheim, Emile. [1912] 1965. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Translated by Joseph Ward Swain. New York: Free Press.
- Epstein, Richard A. 1992. *Forbidden Grounds: The Case Against Employment Discrimination Laws*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Feagin, Joe R., and Melvin P. Sikes. 1994. *Living With Racism: The Black Middle-Class Experience*. Boston: Beacon.
- Featherman, David L., and Robert M. Hauser. 1978. *Opportunity and Change*. New York: Academic.
- Flavell, John H. 1963. *The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget*. New York: Van Nostrand.
- Fordham, Signithia. 1988. "Racelessness as a Factor in Black Students' School Success: Pragmatic Strategy or Pyrrhic victory?" *Harvard Educational Review* 58:54–84.
- Fordham, Signithia, and John U. Ogbu. 1986. "Black Students' School Success: Coping with the 'Burden of Acting White'." *The Urban Review* 18:176–206.
- Gans, Herbert J. 1968. "Culture and Class in the Study of Poverty: An Approach to Antipoverty Research." Pp. 201–228 in *On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives From the Social Sciences*, edited by D. P. Moynihan. New York: Basic.
- Gould, Mark. 1981. "Marx²Weber: The Role of Ideas in History." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. Toronto, Canada.
- . 1986. "Puritanism and the English Revolution." Presented at a Princeton University Mellon Colloquium. Princeton, New Jersey.
- . 1987. *Revolution in the Development of Capitalism: The Coming of the English Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- . 1990a. "Gould Replies to Blalock." Pp. 418–22 in *Robert K. Merton: Consensus and Controversy*, edited by J. Clark, C. Modgil, and S. Modgil. London: Falmer.
- . 1990b. "The Interplay of General Sociological Theory and Empirical Research." Pp. 499–16 in *Robert K. Merton: Consensus and Controversy*, edited by J. Clark, C. Modgil, and S. Modgil. London: Falmer.
- . 1992a. "Law and Sociology: Some Consequences for the Law of Employment Discrimination Deriving from the Sociological Reconstruction of Economic Theory." *Cardozo Law Review* 13:1517–78.
- . 1992b. "The New Racism in United States Society." Pp. 154–74 in *The Dynamics of Social Systems*, edited by P. Colomy. London: Sage.
- . 1993. "Legitimation and Justification: The Logic of Moral and Contractual Solidarity in Weber and Durkheim." Pp. 205–225 in *Current Perspectives in Social Theory*, vol. 13, edited by B. Agger. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- . 1994. "Unconscionability in Contract Law: Durkheim, Llewellyn and the Limits of Legal Realism." Presented at the American Sociological Association Theory Section Conference, "Practicing Theory." San Diego, California.
- . 1995. "Unconscionability, Free Contract and the Law Against Employment Discrimination: Richard Epstein On and Against the Government's Fiduciary Responsibility for Contract Regulation." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association. Toronto, Canada.
- . 1996a. "Equity or Dworkin's Egalitarianism: Principles that Incorporate Policies Versus Principles that Stand on their Own." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association, Glasgow, Scotland.
- . 1996b. "Law and Philosophy: Some Consequences for the Law Deriving From the Sociological Reconstruction of Philosophical Theory." *Cardozo Law Review* 17:1239–1363.
- . 1997. "Race and Politics: Normative Orders and the Explanation for Political Difference, the Simpson Verdict, the Million Man March and Colin Powell." *Social Identities* 3:33–46
- . Forthcoming. "The Generalized Media of Communication and the Logic of Cultural Intelligibility: Macro and Micro Analyses in Luhmann, Habermas and Parsons." In *Emotion, Communication and Solidarity*, edited by Harold Bershad, Victor Lidz, Helmut Staubmann and Harald Wenzel.
- Herbert, Bob. (Moderator). 1994. "Who Will Help the Black Man?" *New York Times Magazine*, December 4:72–78, 90–93, 109–10.
- Hinde, Robert A., Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont, and Joan Stevenson-Hinde. 1985. *Social Relationships, Cognitive Development*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hochschild, Jennifer L. 1995. *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race, Class, and the Soul of the Nation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inhelder, Bärbel and Jean Piaget. 1958. *The Growth of Logical Thinking From Childhood to Adolescence: An Essay on the Construction of Formal Operational Structures*. Translated by Anne Parsons and Stanley Milgram. New York: Basic.
- Kirschenman, Joleen and Kathryn M. Neckerman. 1991. "'We'd Love to Hire Them, But . . .': The Meaning of Race for Employers." Pp. 203–34 in *The Urban Underclass*, edited by C. Jencks and P. E. Peterson. Washington, D. C.: Brookings.
- Cluegel, James R., and Eliot R. Smith. 1986. *Beliefs About Inequality: Americans' Views of What Is and What Ought to Be*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Labov, William. 1972. *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Luhmann, Niklas. 1976. "Generalized Media and the Problem of Contingency." Pp. 507–32 in *Explorations in General Theory in the Social Sciences*, vol. 2, edited by J. J. Loubser, R. C. Baum, A. Effrat, and V. M. Lidz. New York: Free Press.
- . [1972] 1985. *A Sociological Theory of Law*. Translated by Elizabeth King-Utz and Martin Albrow. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Matza, David. 1964. *Delinquency and Drift*. New York: Wiley.
- Merton, Robert. 1964. "Anomie, Anomia and Social Interaction: Contexts of Deviant Behavior." Pp. 213–242 in *Anomie and Deviant Behavior*, edited by M. Clinard. New York: Free Press.
- Merton, Robert K. [1957, 1949] 1968. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press.
- Murray, Charles. 1984. *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950–1980*. New York: Basic.
- Neckerman, Kathryn, Robert Aponte, and William Julius Wilson. 1988. "Family Structure, Black Unemployment, and American Social Policy." Pp. 397–420 in *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States*, edited by M. Weir, A. S. Orloff, and T. Skocpol. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ogbu, John U. 1974. *The Next Generation: An Ethnography of Education in an Urban Neighborhood*. New York: Academic Press.

- . 1978. *Minority Education and Caste: The American System in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York: Academic Press.
- . 1981a. "Black Education: A Cultural-Ecological Perspective." Pp. 139–54 in *Black Families*, edited by H. P. McAdoo. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- . 1981b. "Origins of Human Competence: A Cultural-Ecological Perspective." *Child Development* 52: 413–29.
- . 1982. "Cultural Discontinuities and Schooling." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 13:290–307.
- . 1983. "Minority Status and Schooling in Plural Societies." *Comparative Education Review* 27:168–90.
- . 1985. "A Cultural Ecology of Competence Among Inner-City Blacks." Pp. 45–66 in *Beginnings: The Social and Affective Development of Black Children*, edited by M. B. Spencer, G. K. Brookins, and W. R. Allen. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- . 1987. "Variability in Minority School Performance: A Problem in Search of an Explanation." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 18:312–34.
- . 1988. "Cultural Diversity and Human Development." Pp. 11–28 in *Black Children and Poverty: A Developmental Perspective*, edited by D. T. Slaughter. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- . 1989a. "Cultural Boundaries and Minority Youth Orientation Toward Work Preparation." Pp. 101–40 in *Adolescence and Work: Influences of Social Structure, Labor Markets, and Culture*, edited by D. Stern and D. Eichorn. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- . 1989b. "The Individual in Collective Adaptation: A Framework for focusing on Academic Underperformance and Dropping Out Among Involuntary Minorities." Pp. 181–204 in *Dropouts from School: Issues, Dilemmas and Solutions*, edited by L. Weis, E. Farrar, and H. G. Petrie. Albany: SUNY Press.
- . 1990. "Minority Education in Comparative Perspective." *Journal of Negro Education* 59:45–57.
- . 1991a. "Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities in Comparative Perspective." Pp. 3–36 in *Minority Status and Schooling: A Comparative Study of Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities*, edited by M. A. Gibson and J. U. Ogbu. New York: Garland.
- . 1991b. "Low School Performance as an Adaptation: The Case of Blacks in Stockton, California." Pp. 249–86 in *Minority Status and Schooling: A Comparative Study of Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities*, edited by M. A. Gibson and J. U. Ogbu. New York: Garland.
- . 1991c. "Minority Coping Responses and School Experience." *The Journal of Psychohistory* 18:433–56.
- . 1992a. "Adaptation to Minority Status and Impact on School Success." *Theory Into Practice* 31:287–95.
- . 1992b. "Understanding Cultural Diversity and Learning." *Educational Researcher* 21:5–14, 24.
- . 1993. "Differences in Cultural Frame of Reference." *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 16:483–506.
- . 1994. "Racial Stratification and Education in the United States: Why Inequality Persists." *Teachers College Record* 96:264–98.
- . 1995. "A Cultural-Ecological Perspective on Minority Education." *Manuscript*.
- . September 4, 1995. Letter to Author
- Perret-Clermont, Anne-Nelly. 1980. *Social Interaction and Cognitive Development in Children*. Translated by Carol Sherrard. London: Academic Press.
- Piaget, Jean. [1932] 1962. *The Moral Judgment of the Child*. Translated by Marjorie Gabain. New York: Collier.
- Rosenbaum, James E. 1991. "Black Pioneers—Do Their Moves to the Suburbs Increase Economic Opportunity for Mothers and Children." *Housing Policy Debate* 2:1179–1213.
- Rosenbaum, James E., Nancy Fishman, Alison Brett, and Patricia Meaden. 1993. "Can the Kerner Commission's Housing Strategy Improve Employment, Education, and Social Integration for Low-Income Blacks?" *North Carolina Law Review* 71:1519–56.
- Rosenbaum, James E., and Susan J. Popkin. 1991. "Employment and Earnings of Low-Income Blacks Who Move to Middle-Class Suburbs." Pp. 342–56 in *The Urban Underclass*, edited by C. Jencks and P. E. Peterson. Washington, D. C.: Brookings.
- Shack, W. A. 1970. "On Black American Values in White America: Some Perspectives on the Cultural Aspects of Learning Behavior and Compensatory Education." A paper prepared for the *Social Science Research Council: Subcommittee on Values and Compensatory Education*, 1970–1.
- Slingerland, Dixon. 1991. "Interview With William Julius Wilson." *Future Choices: Toward a National Youth Policy* 3:17–27.
- Smelser, Neil J. 1962. *Theory of Collective Behavior*. New York: Free Press.
- Wacquant, Loïc J. D., and William Julius Wilson. 1989a. "The Cost of Racial and Class Exclusion in the Inner City." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 501:8–25.
- . 1989b. "Poverty, Joblessness, and the Social Transformation of the Inner City." Pp. 70–102, 321–36, 295–298 in *Welfare Policy for the 1990s*, edited by P. H. Cottingham and D. T. Ellwood. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Wilson, William Julius. [1978] 1980. *The Declining Significance of Race*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1984a. "The Black Underclass." *The Wilson Quarterly* 8:88–99.
- . 1984b. "The Urban Underclass." Pp. 75–117 in *Minority Report: What Has Happened to Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, and Other Minorities in the Eighties*, edited by L. W. Dunbar. New York: Pantheon.
- . 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1988. "Social Policy and Minority Groups: What Might Have Been and What Might We See in the Future?" Pp. 231–52 in *Divided Opportunities: Minorities, Poverty, and Social Policy*, edited by G. D. Sandefur and M. Tienda. New York: Plenum.
- . 1989. "The Underclass: Issues, Perspectives, and Challenges." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 501:182–92.
- . 1991. "Studying Inner-City Dislocations: The Challenge of Public Agenda Research." *American Sociological Review* 56:1–14.
- . 1991–92. "Another Look at *The Truly Disadvantaged*." *Political Science Quarterly* 106:639–56.
- . 1994a. "Comments on *American Apartheid*." Paper delivered at the *Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association*. Los Angeles, California.
- . 1994b. "The New Urban Poverty and the Problem of Race." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 33:247–73.
- . 1995. "Reviving the Environmental Perspective in the Public Policy Debate." Presented at the *Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association*. Washington, D.C.
- . 1996. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Knopf.
- Wilson, William Julius, Robert Aponte, Joleen Kirschenman, and Loïc J. D. Wacquant. 1988. "The Ghetto Underclass and the Changing Structure of Urban Poverty." Pp. 123–51, 203–206 in *Quiet Riots: Race and Poverty in the United States*, edited by F. R. Harris and R. W. Wilkins. New York: Pantheon.
- Wilson, William Julius, and Kathryn M. Neckerman. 1986. "Poverty and Family Structure: The Widening Gap between Evidence and Public Policy Issues." Pp. 232–59 in *Fighting Poverty: What Works and What Doesn't*, edited by S. H. Danziger and D. H. Weinberg. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.